

Influence of N-Power on the entrepreneurial spirit and business start-up rates among youth in Anambra State

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Abstract

A major socio-economic issue in Nigeria is youth unemployment which has led the government to initiate the N-Power intervention programmes to complement youth empowerment and entrepreneurship development. The current research adopted a descriptive survey design to investigate the N-Power recipients in six Local Government Areas of the state of Anambra. A sample of 343 was sampled out of 2,412 youths in the age group of 18 to 35 based on the formula of Taro Yamane and proportionately distributed according to Bowleys method. The information was collected through a structured 5-point Likert questionnaire. The expert review ensured face and content validity, whereas reliability was tested by a test-retest procedure. The statistical data were analyzed with SPSS and Pearson correlation coefficients were computed at a significance level of 5 percent. Results show that most of the respondents felt that the N-Power programme had influenced positively entrepreneurship spirit and business start ups among the young people in Anambra State. A significant percentage of them reported to have been better equipped in the programme to start businesses, to get jobs, and to be supported or counselled on starting businesses. A good number of the respondents also indicated that they would recommend the programme to other job seekers. In addition, Pearson correlation analysis ($r=.199, p=.05$) demonstrated a statistically significant positive correlation between N-Power participation and the business start-up rates among the youths. The research determined that N-Power programme is central in encouraging youth entrepreneurship in Anambra State and advised the government to enhance the program by offering better training, start-up capital and post-programme mentorship with the aim of fostering sustainable business activities among youth beneficiaries.

Keywords: N-Power scheme, youth unemployment, business start-ups, youth empowerment, Anambra State

Introduction

One of the acute socio-economic issues in Nigeria is youth unemployment. Thousands of graduates enter the labour market every year without securing a proper job, thus resulting into widespread poverty, dependency, and social instability. In spite of the existence of a number of state programs designed to mitigate the issue of unemployment, the situation remains unchanged. The Federal Government of Nigeria has, therefore, established the N-Power programme in 2016 as a subdivision of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) to equip youths with skills, offer temporary jobs, and empowers them economically (Shuaibu, 2026). This programme is anticipated to not only lower the number of unemployed but also to boost the entrepreneurial spirit and business start-up by young people. There are some concerns though, about whether N-Power has in fact stimulated entrepreneurship and sustainable business development amongst the beneficiaries.

N-Power programme was meant to enhance the 18-24 demographic in terms of employability by introducing them to the appropriate work skills and experience. The programme comprises of a number of elements including N-Teach, N-Agro, N-Health, N-Tech, and N-Creative each focusing on various sectors of the economy. These aspects offer training, mentorship, and temporary work placements which enable young Nigerians to gain a hands-on experience and knowledge in their fields. The programme also includes monthly stipends to the beneficiaries which give them temporary financial assistance in order to alleviate the immediate economic strain that unemployment places. The initiative was unveiled with a particular aim to deal with the problem of youth unemployment and empower citizens by providing them with skills and employing them (Robert et al., 2023).

Among the important outputs of the N-Power programme is its impact on the entrepreneurial spirit of the young generation. The programme imparts confidence and competencies to the youth to start their own businesses by subjecting them to practical training and skill development. Entrepreneurship succeeds when people have corresponding skills, imagination, and capabilities to find economic opportunities. As Agunyai (2025) puts it, the N-Power programme focuses on the inherent entrepreneurial capabilities of the beneficiaries to improve their self-employment and innovation. This strategy tends to conform to general youth empowerment strategies, which aim to foster self-sufficiency, as opposed to depending on government jobs.

Additionally, the programme also plays a role in developing human capital, which is a very important consideration in entrepreneurship. Skills acquisition programmes enhance productivity and enhance individual ability to participate in economic activities. N-Power beneficiaries are also trained in digital technology, agriculture, health services, and education, which are highly entrepreneurial fields. Research has indicated that the programme has impacted positively on youth empowering and productivity by acquiring skills and building capacity (Olorunsola, 2022). The youths are likely to start small businesses or participate in innovative economic practices when they are equipped with practical skills.

Financial support and income generation is another avenue that the N- Power programme encourages entrepreneurship among participants. The monthly stipends that beneficiaries receive offer short-term financial solvency and would be seed capital in small business ventures. Lots of the participants use these funds on petty trading, farms, digital services, and consultancy work. This economic empowerment helps in closing economic and digital opportunity gaps among the youth, especially in economies that are developing like Nigeria (Okoye et al., 2023). In addition, the development of effective manpower development programs that offer monetary rewards and skills acquisition have been identified to be a

major productivity and entrepreneurial growth driver (Anaekwe et al., 2025). Youth economic empowerment programmes are also used to enhance civic engagement and socio-economic inclusion in society (Nwobi et al., 2023). Such initiatives can also help achieve social stability and community development through enhancing the economic opportunities of the youths, which reflect the other forms of government intervention aimed at promoting security and socio-economic well-being (Okafor et al., 2025a; Okafor et al., 2025b). These findings demonstrate the contribution of financial support programmes towards arousing entrepreneurial interest among young Nigerians.

Moreover, the programme promotes innovation and technological entrepreneurship, especially, its N-Tech and digital skills constituents. Digital technologies, such as software development, online marketing, and the creation of digital content, are becoming more and more the force behind the modern entrepreneurial ecosystem. The programme equips the young people to join the new digital economy by offering training that enables them to learn in these areas. Empowerment programs to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation among youth have been identified to be critical in economic diversification and sustainable development in Nigeria (Omeje et al., 2020). Although these have been positive contributions, the role of N-Power programme in business start-ups and entrepreneurship has faced numerous challenges and limitations. The first is the short-lived nature of the programme. Beneficiaries usually do so on a short-term basis and after this time most of them go back to unemployment since they do not have long-term employment or business support systems. Research has also contended that, despite the fact that N-Power offers temporary income and skills training, it has tended to be a relief mechanism, as opposed to being a lasting solution to youth unemployment (Agunyai, 2025).

The absence of proper post-programme entrepreneurship support is another constraint. Creating a successful business must have access to capital, mentors, business networks, and supportive infrastructure. In the absence of these resources, a number of beneficiaries fail to convert the acquired skills into sustainable businesses. Besides, disparities like delays in paying stipends, administrative weakness, and insufficient monitoring systems have also undermined the performance of the programme in encouraging entrepreneurship (Afolabi et al., 2025).

The necessity of a study is determined by the fact that the issue of youth unemployment and lack of economic opportunities in Nigeria is persistent. Unemployment among the youth has been pointed out as a significant socio-economic problem that causes poverty, dependency, and social instability. As a result, the Nigerian government introduced N-Power programme which expects to equip youth with skills, job opportunities and entrepreneurial capacity building (Osimeha et al., 2025). Nonetheless, regardless of the goals of the programme the analysis of how much it has achieved its objectives in promoting entrepreneurship and business creation among youths is a matter that is not adequately addressed.

Previously, the overall effect of N-Power programme on youth empowerment and productivity in the national level or in other Nigerian states were already investigated (Nnaeto and Nwambuko, 2023). These research papers suggest that the programme helps in skills generation and job creation but also presents issues like inconsistent payments and assistance to long-term entrepreneurship. Moreover, studies on youth entrepreneurship in Anambra State have focused on the correlation between entrepreneurial skills and reduction in unemployment without paying particular attention to the element of government intervention programmes like N-Power in triggering business start-ups (Musami, 2023). This implies that there is a large empirical gap concerning the effect of N-power on entrepreneurial motivation and the frequency of new business start-ups by youths in the

Anambra State. Hence, the study is required to give real-life information on the effectiveness of the programme in enhancing youth entrepreneurship between 2016 and 2024 and to guide policy changes to create sustainable youth empowerment.

Objective

To investigate how N-Power has influenced the entrepreneurial spirit and business start-up rates among youth in Anambra State.

Research Question

How has N-Power influenced the entrepreneurial spirit and business start-up rates among youth in Anambra State?

Hypothesis

Hi: N-Power has a significant influence on the entrepreneurial spirit and business start-up rates among youth in Anambra State

Ho: N-Power has no significant influence on the entrepreneurial spirit and business start-up rates among youth in Anambra State

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which enabled the researcher to collect structured data directly from respondents using a questionnaire. This design was considered appropriate because it facilitates the collection of information relating to attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and behavioral patterns that may not be readily available in documented sources. It allows for systematic description of phenomena as they exist without manipulation of variables. The area of study was Anambra State, located in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Created in 1976 and later restructured in 1991, the state is popularly known as “The Light of the Nation.” It is geographically positioned east of the River Niger and bounded by several neighboring states including Delta, Imo, Kogi, and Enugu. With an estimated population of 6,012,205 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019), Anambra is one of the most densely populated states in Nigeria, predominantly inhabited by the Igbo ethnic group.

The population of the study comprised 2,412 N-Power beneficiaries aged 18–35 years across six selected Local Government Areas (LGAs): Dunukofia (352), Idemili North (520), Orumba North (393), Ekwusigo (410), Onitsha South (400), and Anambra East (337), based on the National Social Register (2024). To determine the sample size, Taro Yamane’s formula at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error was applied, yielding a sample size of 343 respondents. Bowley’s proportional allocation formula was then used to distribute the sample proportionately across the six LGAs. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to select respondents from the three senatorial zones of the state. Both primary and secondary sources of data were utilized. Primary data were obtained directly from respondents through a structured questionnaire, while secondary data were sourced from textbooks, journals, and other scholarly materials.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section A captured demographic information, while Section B contained closed-ended items measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). To ensure validity, face and content validation were conducted through expert review by supervisors and a statistician. Recommendations were incorporated into the final instrument. Reliability was established using the test–retest method with twenty respondents outside the selected LGAs, yielding

consistent results after two weeks. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 20, with hypotheses tested using Pearson Product–Moment Correlation at a 5% level of significance.

Results

Research Question: To investigate how N-Power has influenced the entrepreneurial spirit and business start-up rates among youth in Anambra State

Table 1: Respondents’ responses to issues in the second research question N=256

S/N	QUESTIONS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	U (%)	Total
1	I get skills and knowledge acquired through N-Power programme have been most helpful in business start-up	21 (8)	20 (8)	100 (39)	100 (39)	15 (6)	256 (100)
2	My participation in N-Power programme has impacted in business start up	99 (38)	129 (50)	7 (3)	9 (4)	12 (5)	256 (100)
3	I secure a job or gain self employment through the skills and training received in N-Power programme.	108 (42)	85 (33)	28 (11)	35 (14)	-	256 (100)
4	I received many supports or guidance from N-Power programme in Anambra State in terms of job placement and entrepreneurship opportunities.	120 (47)	136 (53)	-	-	-	256 (100)
5	I would recommend N-Power programme to others who are seeking employment opportunities in Anambra State.	129 (50)	108 (42)	-	-	19 (8)	256 (100)

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

How N-Power has influenced the entrepreneurial spirit and business start-up rates among youth in Anambra State is the focus of table 1. The table contains five statements numbered six to ten. In the table above, 8 percent of the respondents strongly agreed to the first statement that they get skills and knowledge acquired through N-Power programme have been most helpful in business start-up. Another 8 percent agreed, 39 percent disagreed and strongly disagreed while 6 percent of the respondents were undecided. The implication of the response of the respondents to the first statement can be found in their responses to the second and third statements where 38 percent of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement that it influenced the entrepreneurial spirit and business start-up rates among young Nigerians. To that statement, 50 percent agreed, 3 percent disagreed, 4 percent strongly disagreed and 5 percent of the respondents were undecided.

Also to question eight, 42 percent of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement that my participation in N-Power programme has impacted in business start up. In the same statement, 33 percent agreed, 11 percent disagreed, 14 percent strongly disagreed none of the respondents were undecided. The importance of wealth accumulation by youths is not lost on the respondents as 47 percent of the respondents strongly agreed to the assertion in question

nine that there it resulted to accumulation of wealth by youths in Anambra State. Also in question nine, 53 percent of the respondents agreed while none of the respondents sat on the fence (undecided) or disagreed to the statement.

Again, 47 percent of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement that they received many supports or guidance from N-Power programme in Anambra State in terms of job placement and entrepreneurship opportunities, 53 percent agree that they received many supports or guidance from N-Power programme in Anambra State in terms of job placement and entrepreneurship opportunities. Furthermore, 50 percent of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement that they would recommend N-Power programme to others who are seeking employment opportunities in Anambra State and 8 percent of the respondents were undecided.

Hypothesis Two

Hi: N-Power has a significant influence on the entrepreneurial spirit and business start-up rates among youth in Anambra State

Ho: N-Power has no significant influence on the entrepreneurial spirit and business start-up rates among youth in Anambra State

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Analysis Showing the Relationship between N-Power Programme Participation and Business Start-Up among Youth (N = 256).

		N-Power	Business start-up
N-Power	Pearson Correlation	1	.199*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.021
	N	256	256
Business start-up	Pearson Correlation	.199*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.041	
	N	256	256

*. Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the computation in the table 2, it shows that the probability value (0.021) is less than the alpha value (0.05), as a result, the researcher accepts null hypothesis and concludes that N-Power has a significant influence on the entrepreneurial spirit and business start-up rates among youth in Anambra State.

Discussion

The result on objective one revealed that N-Power has influenced the entrepreneurial spirit and business start-up rates among youth in Anambra State. Nigerians the implication is that improving government investment in N- Power will enhance entrepreneurship spirit and business start-up rates among young Nigeria. These findings underscore the program's importance in poverty alleviation efforts while highlighting the need for continued assessment and improvement. One of the keyways in which the N-Power Programme contributes to employment generation is through skill development. The program equips beneficiaries with entrepreneurship spirit, skills and competencies in various fields such as education, agriculture, health, and technology. These skills significantly enhance the employability of participants. The program provides practical training and work experience to

its beneficiaries, allowing them to gain hands-on experience in their chosen fields. This real-world exposure is invaluable when seeking employment, as it not only enhances their knowledge but also demonstrates their ability to apply what they've learned. N-Power also actively supports job placement for its beneficiaries. This agrees with the findings of Ogundele, Akingbade and Akinlabi, (2012), which states that the purpose of entrepreneurship and skill acquisition programme as a means youth empowerment is to prepare and equip the youths with appropriate skills that can be beneficial to them in future.

Conclusion

The paper has investigated the effect of N-Power programme on the entrepreneurial drive and the rate of business start-ups by young people in Anambra State, Nigeria, during 2016-2024. The results indicated that the programme has had a significant role in empowering young people by equipping and training them with skills and opportunities to become self-employed and entrepreneurs. According to many of the beneficiaries, the programme has helped them to become better-placed to find jobs, gain practical experience, and build the confidence they needed to venture into businesses. The research also demonstrated that the N-Power programme offers advice and assistance towards finding employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, which has prompted youths to think about starting a business as an alternative to formal employment. The affirmative answers given by the respondents also indicate that the programme has enabled to enhance entrepreneurial motivation among the youth in Anambra State. Also, the statistical breakdowns have shown that there is a significant correlation between the involvement in the N-Power programme and business start-up rates among youths, which means that the programme has had some significant impact on entrepreneurial activity.

Although these are some of the positive results, the programme continues to experience various limitations that can influence its long-term effect. Problems like transitional employment model, ineffective post-programme reinforcement, and insufficient access to start-up funds might limit the opportunities of the beneficiaries to set up and run successful businesses after the completion of the programme. These difficulties indicate a need to enhance how the programme is implemented and the support systems to strengthen the youth entrepreneurship.

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