

Empirical Analysis of Effect of Youth Empowerment Practice on Nigeria's National Development

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Abstract

This study is carried out to analyse the effect of youth empowerment on national development in Nigeria. Survey research approach was adopted for the study with emphasis on the use of questionnaire to collect data sourced from respondents. The result of the study showed that there exists positive and significant relationship between education and national development of Nigeria with a coefficient value of 0.521 and sig. value of 0.000 which is lower than 0.05 level of significance. Also, employment and financial support for youth empowerment has positive coefficients of 0.044 and 0.069 respectively. The study conclude that the heterogeneity that exists among the youth empowerment programs variable as it relates to national development call for re-engineering in order to explore the potential growth virtues embedded in the youth empowerment practices that are yet to be used by nations. The study recommended that there is need for continuous strategic positioning of youth empowerment to reflect current economic realities.

Keywords: *Nigeria, Education, Employment, Youth Empowerment, National Development*

Introduction

Youth they say, are the future leaders of tomorrow, as such, need to be handled properly and well taking care of, because they possess the strong will and expertise to deliver the nation into victory over her socio-economic hurdles. Effort should be made to nurture and grow the youth eco-system. Youth are often dynamic, resourceful, creative, innovative and adventurous. It is therefore imperative to note that the youths and/or youthful labour are very pivotal or critical to national development of Nigeria, they are one of the greatest resources and a necessary force for improving the productivity and sustained growth of all sector of the economy (Isike, and Ovekaemo, 2018). All this would not be possible if the government provide conducive policy environment that promotes collective engagements in democratic processes and also support and encourage them (youth) in order to meaningfully contribute to national development. The United Nations General Assembly in 1985 called for the international youth participation and peace, to harp on the prowess role of young people in the world. The assembly went further to endorsed the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up. According to Waziri Musa. and Abu Idris (2019) Youth

Empowerment means a way of inculcating into the youth the spirit of transformation of ideas into creativeness. The youth are the most energetic and active members of the entire society, so their contributions and role in national development need no to be over-emphasized. In 1995, UN also strengthened its commitment to the youth by directing the international community's response to the challenges of young people into the next millennium.

Problem Statement

Successive governments in Nigeria have continually made efforts to address the challenges facing the youth in the country by introducing programs such as, Youth Initiative for Sustainable Agriculture in Nigeria (YISA), National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Leap Africa, Africa's Youth Entrepreneurs Empowerment Nigeria (AYEEN) to mention but few. Despite these programmes and many others, there has been increasing issues and challenges with respect to youth empowerment, including youth unemployment, increasing crimes and criminality such as kidnapping, oil theft, banditry, drug abuse, among others. indeed, these issues and challenges have negative impact on the national development in Nigeria. Akande (2016), posits that the major reason for the failure of these efforts is faulty selection of beneficiaries and trainees for the programmer. According to him, youths are usually "lumped" together as if they are homogenous in terms of education, skills capabilities, etc. He added that finance, poor governance and policy implementation, inconsistent policies, and unqualified resource persons handling the training programmes all contribute to the failure of government youth empowerment programs in Nigeria. Past study on the relevance of youth empowerment in national development has largely focused on developed nation with few studies assessing developing nations. Nigeria as a developing nation must build into her policy formulation the impact of youth welfare. However, the consciousness of such socio-economic strategy has not been created. The study therefore focuses on the impact of youth empowerment on national development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Youth Empowerment

Empowerment means a policy of providing special opportunities in education, training, etc to young people (Muhammed.I.A and Tersur.V.J).It also the process of supporting a person or persons to discover and claim personal power. According to Youth Empowerd solutions (YES) (2015), youth empowerment is the outcome by which youths, as change agents, gain relevant skills to impact their own lives and the lives of other individuals, organizations and communities. YES also identified two levels of youth empowerment at the individual and the organizational levels. AT the individual level youth empowerment programmes should be such that endow the person with abilities to exercise power over one's life by being skilled critically aware and active in creating change in the community. Sodipo (2014) explained that, the high incidence of crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping, cultism, terrorism (Boko Haram), prostitutions, drug paddling and others social vices that are been exhibited in the country are as a results of high rate of unemployment thereby making the youth populace to be hopeless and subjecting them to aggression. Akintayo and Adiat (2013) affirmed that the nefarious practice of policy formulators is a major factor to policy failures. At the organizational level youth empowerment programmes should be carried out through well established structures that guarantee the implementation of a

culture, vision and system that supports youth empowerment at the individual level. United Nation (2015) asserted that the issue of youth empowerment is a global phenomenon and it is the greatest challenges in this dispensation so much that discussion and debates on it are ongoing as old convictions and ideologies have failed to yield the desired results. Kalagbor, and Harry (2018) observed that, Nigeria governments at different levels of governance had embarked on various uncoordinated youth empowerment schemes over the years that amounted to little or nothing in real terms. They identified ten (10) youth empowerment strategies in Nigeria to include (i) development of youth skills (ii) opportunities for physical, social and mental development, (iii) provision of better working opportunities; (iv) active participation in community service, (v) provision of recreational facilities, (vi) involvement of leadership training, (vii) provision of micro-credit facilities, (viii) scholarships/bursaries, (ix) formation of organizations, and (x) involvement in decision making processes.

The Nigerian government in furthering the goal of empowerment and development among youth has developed initiative, policies, programmes and projects such as:

- i. N-POWER which is a youth empowerment scheme sponsored by the federal government of Nigeria to address the challenges of youth unemployment by providing a structure for large-scale and relevant work skills acquisition and development while linking its core and outcomes to fixing inadequate public services and stimulating the larger economy. N-POWER is designed for Nigeria citizens between the ages of 18 and 35.
- ii. NATIONAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (NEEDS) is described as a Nigeria's plan for prosperity which envisaged policies and programmes of the federal government. It is not only a macro-economic plan document, but also a comprehensive vision, goals and principles of a "New Nigeria" through re-enacting core Nigeria value like respect for the elders, honesty, accountability, corporation, industry, discipline, self-confidence and moral courage.
- iii. SUBSIDY REINVESTMENT AND EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM (SURE-P) is a scheme established by the federal Government of Nigeria aim at provision of employments for unemployed graduates through internship programs and also to create database of unemployed youth and reduced social vulnerability among the group in the country through the mechanism of the policy. Beneficiaries are Nigeria men aged 18-35, and women aged 18-50, who are poor, with no other source of income and with no more than a secondary school educational qualification.
- iv. YOUTH EMPOWERMENT NIGERIA (YEN) Is a non-profit project established to address the gaps of diversity, empower youths in numerous areas of life, capacity building, youth involvement in service projects, civic engagement, philanthropy and decision-making of their communities.
- v. YOUTH INITIATIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN NIGERIA (YISA) aims to motivate young adults to get involved in the agricultural sector and make good use of the profitable market it has.

Young people are also exposed to some forms of inequality and dissemination, often linked with specific identities. For instance, while progress has not been made in making education more assessable to the young disabled.

Barriers of Youth Empowerment in Nigeria

The barriers faced by youth in Nigeria are of huge concern and as such, poses threats to the development of the nation, which includes the following:

- i. **CORRUPTION:** Corruption runs through every level of Nigerian government which is a constant phenomenon and has eaten deeply into the government. It is an anti-social attitude awarding improper privileges contrary to moral norms, and impairs the authorities capacity to secure the welfare of all citizen especially in youths. In 2018, the country ranked 144th in the 180 countries listed in Transparency Internationals Corruption Index. Public fund that were meant for developmental projects are being misappropriated on a regular basis by the leaders, who always satisfied their personal interests at the expense of the citizens. It is no doubt that Corruption in Nigeria has increased poverty and inequality which has led to high rate of crime in the country.
- ii. **CONSTANTS CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT POLICIES:** Constant change in government policies have created a lot of problems in the development of youth in Nigeria. Lack of continuity among public authorities has significantly affected the success of youth empowerment in Nigeria.
- iii. **POOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM:** Education plays a vital role in the development of youth in the country. According to World Bank, education is central to development. Youth most times do not have access to functional and qualitative education, and the government is not making adequate effort in the provision of free education or driving the educational system to more beneficial to the youth.
- iv. **POVERTY:** Many youth today in Africa have suffered the consequence of severe poverty from birth. The rate of poverty in the country is devastating. The rich seems to keep getting richer while the poor continue to struggle to make ends meet. Poverty impedes learning. In recent times, children drop out during school, a stage in which youth development should begin, hunger and poverty are currently ravaging the country thereby exposing our inability to feed.
- v. **SOCIAL MEDIA/INTERNET:** While some may say that internet brought in more good than harm, it is still evident that one of the problems faced by youth is the internet itself. In this technological era, youths are exposed to many vices that are linked to the internet.
- vi. **LACK OF ACCESS TO SUPPORT:** In recent times, it is visible to know that encouragements boosts performance. Youths with great ideas and intellectual are not accessible to support to help them bolster their works and even improve on their ideas. Most times, youths with good plans or even good ideas that might boost the economy in one way or another are not given the kind of encouragement they deserve. Funds are not given to help bring their ideas and plans o fruition and in cases where funds are made available, they are not enough. As such, dashed hopes easily propel vulnerable youths to various crime.

Possible Solutions to Youth Empowerment in Nigeria (infoguide Nigeria)

- i. **YOUTH EMPOWERMENT:** There is need for youth self reliance. Youth empowerment would check the problem of dependency and also give training to youths and ensure they have a standard living.

- ii. **INVOLVING YOUTHS IN SPORTS:** Youths should be encouraged to actively participate in sporting activities. And also the government should finance the sport sector to make it comfortable for them. This also can check out vices of youths
- iii. **IMPROVED EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM:** There is need for an improved educational system and also a need to relate the system to the job market. This would help solve problems of employment, leaving youths prepared for after school life.
- iv. **POVERTY ALLEVIATION:** Poverty alleviation programs should be set up to gradually help check the problem of poverty. Parents should be setup for business or be empowered and advised to learn a trade or new advancement in technology that can help them achieve a standard living. This should help in taking care of the family and also successfully funding a child to school.
- v. **INVOLVING YOUTHS IN GOVERNMENT:** Youths should be giving roles in government to help bring in young and fresh minds into the sector.
- vi. **MORE SUPPORT FOR YOUTHS:** Scholarships should be given to encourage students while also soft loans and grants can be handed to youths to help assist or fund an idea or project.
- vii. **SELF DISCIPLINE:** It is mandatory for a youth to be disciplined. Bad friend influence, drug addiction, bad lifestyle, wrong use of internet social media among others should be avoided.

The youths are the solution and not the problem! We are the future and hope for a better tomorrow.

Reason Why Youth Empowerment Is Important In Nation Building

- i. **POVERTY ERADICATION:** youth empowerment can curb the rate of poverty to a large extents. One of the methods of empowering the youth is through skills development. When youth is equipped with the necessary skills, he or she can utilize them to feed, assist others, and even invest for future use, aiding the nation economically. This will in-turn contribute to the increase in employability and add to the GDP of the nation.
- ii. **GOOD GOVERNANCE:** When the youths are empowered, they empower the masses, thereby paving path for a better future. To build a better tomorrow, we need to nurture the youths of today.
- iii. **EMPLOYMENT CREATION:** This is another importance of youth empowerment. A skillful youth is a job creator. A youth empowered society will not seriously suffer from the problem of unemployment that many nations are battling with in the current time.
- iv. **CRIME REDUCTION AND NATIONAL SECURITY:** Globally, there is a general belief that youth empowerment is a necessary tool for achieving real national security. To empower the youths means primarily that an enabling environment must be created for their development and self actualization. Empowerment ensures that youth has the necessary skills to sustain a livelihood, preventing him to adopt the path of crime.
- v. **IMPROVED STANDARD OF EDUCATION:** Empowerment can help youth to understand the importance of education that leads to social Improvement of the country. Education exposes people to know what they did not know before.

National Development

According to longman dictionary, refer to a phenomenon that embraces a whole nation. National development therefore can be described as the overall development or a collective social, political as well as religious advancement of a country or nation.

We have a series of development plans in Nigeria, The myth of growth and development is so entrenched that the country history passes for the history of development strategies and growth models from colonial times up to date. According to UN Decade report, National development is growth plus change in turn is social, cultural as well as economic and qualitative as well as quantitative.

In 1971, UNO gave the factors for National Development:

- 1) Equal standard for all.
- 2) Equal share of all in profit.
- 3) Similarly, Equal distribution of income and capital.
- 4) Expansion of facilities regarding education, health, shelter and social welfare
- 5) Preservation of environment.

Scope of National Development

- 1) National Development seeks to remove poverty
- 2) It improves the National income as well as per capita income
- 3) It develops quality in Education.
- 4) Use of Science and Technology
- 5) Preservation and development of nature and environment
- 6) Development of the socio economic condition of the people.

Factors Affecting National Development

- 1) **ECONOMIC FACTOR:** Economic development is one of the major factor affecting national development. In an economy where the working population of the nation produces goods and services at higher rate would develop more rapidly than others.
- 2) **POLITICAL FACTOR:** The political system of a nation also determines the rate of national development. In democratic government, it is easier to achieve the desire goal because it is represented by its own people
- 3) **SOCIAL FACTOR:** The society and its stratification also influence the national development. In orthodox society, it become hard to take a decision unanimously which would benefit the nation.
- 4) **SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTOR:** The cultural traits persisted in different societies, determines the way of national development.
- 5) **INCREASE IN POPULATION:** Population of a nation also influence national development of a nation. In country like China, India, Bangladesh people were often deprived of the basic needs due its massive population explosion.
- 6) **HEALTH SECTOR:** health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Development in this sector will mean the removal of all biological, environmental and social, cultural, psychological factors that could cause health hazard in the society. A situation where a greater percentage of the citizens is malnourished, and lack the basic medical care cannot be said to be in a state of development.

National development plan of Nigeria.

According to Commonwealth Governance, Nigeria has had a relatively long experience in development planning beginning with the colonial Development plan (1958-68). Medium-term development plans and national rolling plans were also developed and implemented with mixed results. Other major strategic initiative –such as the Structural adjustments programme: the national Economics Empowerment and Development Strategy: the Strategy for Attaining the Millennium Development Goals: and the 7-point Agenda-were not seen to have been effectively implemented.

The Nigeria Vision 2020 expresses the aspiration for Nigeria to become one of the top 20 economies in the world by 2020. Attainment of the Vision would enable the country to achieve a high standard of living for its citizens.

It was developed by Nigerians for the Nigerian people and involved a process of thorough engagements with all stakeholders across all levels of government and society.

The Vision will be pursued through a series of three/four years plan which will further articulate strategies, policies, projects and programmes.

The two broad objectives of Vision 2020 are to:

- 1) Make efficient use of human and natural resources to achieve rapid economic growth
- 2) Translate the economic growth into equitable social development for all citizens.

Empirical Review

The study of Nnadi et al (2012) entitled rural youth empowerment: a panacea to rural-urban drift in Ethiope-East Area of Delta State, Nigeria was carried out of X-ray the available economic opportunities for empowering rural youths to curb migration to the city. They used a random sampling technique to select youths from communities with high number of youths who often travel. A sample size of 150youths was selected and data collected using questionnaire were analyzed using frequency counts, mean and percentages presented on tabular form. Findings reviewed that t lack of employments opportunities, lack of social amenities, absence of industries, boredom in agriculture are the reason for rural –urban drift. The result reviewed also that low agriculture productivity or output, overcrowding, slowdown of rural development projects, loosening of family bonds, increase crime are the major effects of rural-urban drift.

To curb rural-urban drift, it was recommended that basic social amenities be provided, quality of education improved, creation of credit and loan scheme, access to productive resources, access to information, industrial modernization, health and nutrition education, access to cooperatives/local youth organization and entrepreneurial activities. The above implies that our rural areas could be haven of peace and economic activities, should right facilities be provided. According to Obanya,(2007). Vocational education nurtures skills that are necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development and thus builds a self-reliant nation. Accordingly, vocational and technical education is designed to develop occupational skills to give individuals the skills to “live, learn and work as productive citizens in a global society.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Human Capital Theory.

Human Capital Theory

This theory posits how education leads to increase in productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of their cognitive skills. The provision of education is seen as a productive investment in human capital, an investment which the proponents of human capital theory considers to be equally or even worthwhile than that in physical capital. Human capital theorists have established that basic literacy enhances the productivity of workers of low skills occupations.

METHODOLOGY

The study therefore employed research survey design, which involved comprehensive and detailed act of obtaining data from the mapped area and exploring the relationship between the dependent and independent variables (Nnadi et al, 2012). To gather data for the survey report the administration of questionnaire was carried out on targeted respondents. The study geographical area was Nigeria, however, selected states from each-six geo-political zones where sampled for data collection. The statistical tool adopted to analyze the variables was multiple regression.

Model Specification

The model built extensively from past studies. Therefore, the following equation is formulated;
 $NADV = f(EDUC, EMPL, FSYE) \dots\dots\dots (1.0)$

Expressing the functional notation in equation (1.0) in econometric form;
 $NADV = \beta_0 + \beta_1EDUC + \beta_2EMPL + \beta_3FSYE + \epsilon_i \dots\dots\dots (2.0)$

Where;

- NADV = National Development
- EDUC = Education
- EMPL = Employment
- FSYE = Financial Support for Youth Empowerment
- β_0 , = Constant
- $\beta_1, \beta_2 \beta_3 - \beta_n$ = Coefficients
- ϵ_i = Error term.

Result and Findings

Table 1.0 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.884 ^a	.734	.538	.99285

a. Predictors: (Constant), FSYE, EDUC, EMPL

Table 2.0 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	119.396	3	39.799	40.374	.000 ^b
	Residual	390.354	396	.986		
	Total	509.750	399			

a. Dependent Variable: NADV

b. Predictors: (Constant), FSYE, EDUC, EMPL

Table 3.0 Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.517	.274		16.495	.000
1 EDUC	.521	.048	.477	10.819	.000
EMPL	.044	.044	.044	.999	.319
FSYE	.069	.048	.063	1.439	.151

a. Dependent Variable: NADV

SPSS 20.0

The analysis result shown on Table 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0 above presents the result of the relationship between National Development (NADV) and various independent variables. The result of the regression estimates from Table 1.3 above indicate that there is a positive relationship between Education (EDUC), Employment (EMPL), and Financial Support for Youth Empowerment (FSYE). This is evidenced by coefficient value of 0.521, 0.044, and 0.069. Statistically, only Education (EDUC) has a sig. value of 0.000 is lower than the acceptable significance value of 0.05. This means Education (EDUC) significantly relate to national development. However, Employment (EMPL) and Financial Support for Youth Empowerment (FSYP) showed sig. value of 0.319 and 0.151 respectively which is higher than the acceptable significance value of 0.05. This means that EMPL and FSYE is yet to contribute meaningfully to national development. Furthermore, the regression result from table 3.0 shows that the multiple regression model had a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.538. This means that education, employment, and financial support for youth empowerment explained 53.8% variation of national development. Furthermore, the reveals that the F-value of 40.374 with a p-value of 0.00 significant at 5% indicates that the overall regression model is significant, hence, the joint contribution of the independent variables was significant in predicting the national development.

Discussion

Our study has shown that national development is differently influenced by various youth empowerment strategies. Sustainable national development calls for all round socio-economic approaches which in turn could create an attractive atmosphere for growth and development. Empowerment approaches essentially implies the consolidation and promotion of literacy and the building of empowerment means in the minds of diverse youths to increase youth development and economic growth. More broadly clarified, it connotes integrated approach to address volatile tendencies at different phases of youth activities and development to achieve a meaningful and progressive national development. To achieve this, measures must be strategically structured and put in place for the benefit of everyone. Insecurity in any facet of life is a feeling of unprotectedness, vulnerability, unsafe and helplessness which hinder innovation and often time is the major cause of vice and misery among youths. Moreover, the link between youth empowerment and national development is a complex, but indisputable one.

The primary goals of adopting empowerment programs or mix are to reduce or possibly truncating resistivity and to maintain balanced psychology of the youth by eliminating the economic, social, environmental, political, and other conditions that generate threats to the promoting of peaceful

national coherence by anticipating and managing crises before they worsen. However, there is no assurance that any of the empowerment approach mix would always be effective and yield desired result in national development. Hence continuous evaluation of various national empowerment programs must be practiced. This is because many initiatives quickly break down as soon as external factors flares up sequel to socio-economic effects. This bring to fore the need for relevant authorities to be proactive and promote strategic empowerment activities in the management of empowerment data for optimum national benefit.

Conclusion

The paper attempts to assess the impact of youth empowerment on national development, and the unique features in Nigeria. As earlier indicated, youth empowerment is a unique form of economic acceleration strategy with peculiar attributes. Most youth empowerment advocators believes that nations can be better when adequate empowerment mix is deployed across the nation. The national development is critical to the survival of any nation; and so it is, with youth empowerment. Agencies, organizations and developing nations of the world must adopt a balanced youth empowerment strategy in order to achieve a desired level of growth in their performance across all sectors and geographical locations in the various nations. The over dependence of agencies and organizations on only few active empowerment measurement variables has hampered many productive innovation opportunities by youths in the time past which effects the development of such nations.

As an overall evaluation, it can clearly be seen that there is a requirement to improve and further develop empowerment practices in nations especially in developing nations such as Nigeria. When indirect effect and crowding out are considered, it can further be argued that the private organizations needs to get more involved in the empowerment practices and should be supported and encouraged for maximum benefit too be actualized. Thus, positive effects from general perception will possibly emerge, while it will also be possible to assert that the empowerment programs will further develop in terms of productivity as a result of more attention from relevant authorities. In conclusion, the heterogeneity that exists among the youth empowerment programs variable as it relates to national development call for re-engineering in order to explore the potential growth virtues embedded in the youth empowerment practices that are yet to be used by nations.

Recommendations

Sequel to the findings of the research study, the following recommendations have been made;

- i.** Education (EDUC) has shown to be a positive contributor to national development in Nigeria. This calls for continuous strategic positioning of education to reflect current economic realities.
- ii.** Employment (EMPL) from our study has a positive but insignificant effect. This means that employment strategy adopted by the nation contributes to national development but insignificantly. We advocate for increase in attention given to employment policy in Nigeria.
- iii.** Financial Support for Youth Empowerment (FSYE) with positive coefficient from the study is a pointer that setting up of youth empowerment programs by the nation contributes

to national development. We advocate that more attention be given to youth empowerment funding to ensure significant contribution to national development.

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