



SURVEY OF THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMS TOWARD BENEFICIARIES' ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *In Nigeria, several governments have embarked on a number of social investment programs aimed at poverty reduction, job and wealth creation, economic growth, and positive social development. However, the extent of the impacts of these programs on the beneficiaries' economic empowerment and entrepreneurship development is not yet ascertained in many parts of the country. Therefore, this study was designed to explore the extent of the impact present administration's social investment program (N-SIP) towards beneficiaries' economic empowerment and entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. This study's population comprised a total of 10,267 beneficiaries of the program from nine selected local government areas in Bauchi state. However, a total of 630 beneficiaries were chosen using a proportionate random sampling technique to serve as the sample of the study. Structured questionnaire forms on the impact of social investment programs on entrepreneurship development were used as the instrument for data collection in the study. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, and a t-test was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The results of the study revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between N-SIP and beneficiaries' economic empowerment. Furthermore, the results showed a significant relationship between N-SIP and entrepreneurship development in the country. These imply that social investment programs have significantly impacted the beneficiaries economically and also helped in the development of entrepreneurship in the country. This study provides valuable insights to numerous stakeholders in the area of social investment and entrepreneurship development. Finally, future directions of the study are also provided.*

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship development, Economic Empowerment, Social investment, N-SIP.



INTRODUCTION

Today, poverty and unemployment have become major problems in Nigeria and many sub-Saharan African countries. The National Bureau of Statistics (2010) reported that 60.9% of the population in Nigeria, which accounted for about 130 million persons, were living in poverty. To sustain this assertion, in 2012, the National Bureau of Statistics conducted National Baseline Survey, and the reports showed that more than half of the Nigerian youth population in the country are unemployed. According to UNDP reports (2011), over 100 million Nigerians live below the poverty line, which is less than US\$2 a day and with the percentage of the population in abject poverty rising from 54.7% in 2004 to 60.9% in 2010.

However, considering the magnitude of the problems and the role of entrepreneurship development as the key to poverty eradication, employment generation and rapid economic development of the nation. In Nigeria, over the last three decades, various governments have implemented several social investment programs to address the high rate of unemployment, widespread poverty and low level of economic development. The programs are designed to strengthen individual capacities and skills with a view to engaging them in full employment, work and social life. The social investment programs that were designed and implemented in Nigeria over the last three decades include; the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), the Better Life Programme, the Family Support Programme, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Agricultural Land Development Authority (NALDA), Poverty Alleviation Programme, National Poverty Eradication Programme, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy, and Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P). Despite all these efforts by the various governments, the unemployment rate has remained high, rising from 13.1% in 2000 to 23.9% in 2011, with youth unemployment at over 50% (IMF, 2013). However, studying the weakness of previous programs toward total eradication of poverty and solving the unemployment problems in the country, then the present administration came up with the most recent program, the National Social Investment Program (N-SIP).

The N-SIP scheme was designed to provide opportunities for the terming population in the country to move out from persistent poverty and unemployment through capacity building, investment, and direct financial support. Accordingly, the N-SIP scheme was compartmentalised into three dimensions, and each dimension contains some sub-dimensions enlisted. The N-Power Teachers' Corps was one of the dimensional components of N-SIP with subsidiaries on N-Power Agro, N-Power Health, N-Power Teach and N-Power Community Health. Another dimensional component of N-SIP is the N-Power Knowledge which was designed for individual youths with at least a secondary school educational level. The subsidiaries of N-Power Knowledge include; N-Power Creative, N-Power Tech Hardware and N-Power Tech Software. The third component of the N-SIP is N-Power Build, with civil divisions in the area of building services, construction, environment services, utilities, automotive, as well as aluminium and gas. Therefore, this study intends to evaluate the impact of the social investment programs (N-SIP) on beneficiaries' economic empowerment and entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.



Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to assess the impact of social investment programs (N-SIP) on beneficiaries' economic empowerment and entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. Specifically, the study intends to:

- i. To assess the impact of the social investment program (N-SIP) on beneficiaries' economic empowerment in Nigeria.
- ii. To assess the impact of the social investment program (N-SIP) on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.

Research Questions

In line with the specific objectives of the study, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- i. Does the social investment program (N-SIP) have any significant impact on beneficiaries' economic empowerment in Nigeria?
- ii. Does the social investment program (N-SIP) has any significant impact on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were postulated to guide the conduct of this study:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the social investment program (N-SIP) and beneficiaries' economic empowerment in Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between the social investment program (N-SIP) and entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Social Investment

Social investment views a set of policies and programs designed to curb social and economic risk and vulnerability among less privileged members of society while reducing extreme poverty and deprivation (FAO 2021). The primary objective of social investment is to uplift the lives of poor members of society by decreasing the level of poverty and inequality in society (Crossman 2021). The social investments are formed based on the assumption that welfare states require high employment rates, reduced poverty and inequality, and increased economic growth with an active state to assist in laying the groundwork for this (Bonoli 2012; Morel et al. 2012). The central point of social investment is to shift social policy from protecting of fewer privileged individuals from the risks of market forces through monetary benefits and instead empower the people economically to be fully integrated into the market as much as possible. This, in turn, brings higher levels of employment, reduces dependency and contributes to entrepreneurship development in the state (Oluwatayo & Ojo 2018). Therefore,



social investment involves granting power to individuals to perform certain duties and create positive change in society through poverty reduction, employment and entrepreneurship.

Social Investment Program and Economic Empowerment

There are pieces of evidence in the literature that show a relationship between social investment and economic empowerment (Docampo 2007; Dunga 2014). Some of these studies include; Van Vliet and Wang (2015) conducted a study on social investment and beneficiaries empowerment among Nordic countries in Europe. The result indicates that shifts in government spending to social investment policies are positively associated with disposable income inequality and poverty among beneficiaries. However, Thevenon and Manfredi (2018) conducted a study on social investment programs and poverty reduction. The study reveals that there is no clear linkage between social investment spending and inequality, but there is some evidence that social investment policies reduce disposable income poverty.

Dandan (2011) evaluates the relationship between government spending on social investment and economic empowerment in Jordan. The results indicate that government spending accounts for 50 per cent of economic growth in the country. Similarly, Nishimwe-Niyimbanira et al. (2021) conducted a study on how social grants affected income poverty. The study reveals that social grants have contributed to the increase in income expenditure among recipients. However, in accordance with scholars, structural problems still exist with regard to poverty, income inequality, social initiatives, job creation and entrepreneurship development (Cecchini & Rico 2015; Sakamoto 2021). Therefore, economic analyses, social initiatives, job creation, economic empowerment and entrepreneurship development policies should be continually integrated into social investment programs (Sakamoto, 2021).

Social Investment and Entrepreneurship Development

The relationship between social investment and entrepreneurship development has become controversial over the years. Some empirical studies in the literature show a positive relationship between personal wealth and entrepreneurship (Fonseca, Lopez-Garcia & Pissaride, 2001; Fonseca, Michaud & Sopraseuth, 2007). Others found no significant relationship between individual wealth and the propensity to become an entrepreneur, particularly in developed economies (Hurst & Lusardi, 2004). Similarly, Ahn and Kim (2015) investigated the impact of social investment on economic performance and entrepreneurship development. The results demonstrate that a higher quotient of social investment spending contributes to economic growth, which encourages entrepreneurship development in the economy.

The trajectory of social investment is essential for reducing poverty and inequality as well as for economic growth, whereby entrepreneurship development is regarded as a predictor for economic growth and development of the nation (Adeleye et al. 2020).

Similarly, understanding how social investment and entrepreneurship development are related is an issue essential and may contribute toward solving the problem of unemployment, eradication of poverty, and human and national development (Ogujiuba &

Ntombifuthi, 2022). Accordingly, Saleh (2019) conducted a study on the effects of a social investment programme (N-Power) on the standard of living of business education graduates. The findings revealed that N-power SIP had significant effects in improving the standard of



living of the participants, which led many of the participants to start up their businesses. The study also suggests that government should commit funds to social investment programs since it helps to improve the standard of living and entrepreneurship development.

METHODOLOGY

The study is a descriptive survey aimed to investigate the impact of the social investment program (N-SIP) towards the beneficiaries' economic empowerment and entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. The targeted population comprised the twenty-one thousand five hundred and ten beneficiaries from the selected nine Local Government Areas in Bauchi, Nigeria. The sample was drawn using a stratified sampling technique across the nine local government areas in the state and a total of 630 beneficiaries from seven sub-sections of the N-SIP were used as a sample. A structured survey questionnaires were used as the instrument for data in the study. The researchers personally administered the questionnaire forms with the help of some research assistants who ensured the efficiency of the data collection process. However, a total of 427 questionnaire forms were duly filled and returned. The responses obtained from returned questionnaires served as the data of this study.

Table 1 presents the summary of the proportionate sample size of the N-power beneficiaries in the selected nine local government areas of Bauchi State.

Table 1: Summary of the proportionate sample size of the N-power beneficiaries in the selected nine local government areas of Bauchi State

Sub-Program	Number of the Beneficiaries	Sample size
Trader Monie	2478	73
N-Power Tech	2799	82
N-Power Hardware	1622	48
N-Power Teach	8368	245
N-Power Agro	2785	81
N-Power Tech-Building	1171	34
N-Power Health	2287	67
Total	21,510	630

Source: *N-power Desk Officer, 2022*

Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the responses regarding the research questions of the study using simple percentage and mean. Nik, Jantan and Taib (2010) suggest any mean score of 2.50 and above should be considered an acceptable score, while any score below 2.50 should be rejected. In addition, a t-test was used to test the hypotheses of the study.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1

Does social investment program (N-SIP) has any significant impact on beneficiaries' economic empowerment in Nigeria?

To answer research question one above, the responses on the impact of N-SIP as a social investment programme on beneficiaries' economic empowerment were analyzed using simple frequency, percentages and arithmetic mean (\bar{x}), as shown in Table 2 below. The items were ranked using five points Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree in which the frequencies and percentages of the responses were obtained and analysed to answer the research question.

Table 2: Mean Responses of Respondents on the impact of N-SIP as a social investment program on beneficiaries' economic empowerment in Nigeria.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	\bar{X}	DECISION
1.	The N-power programme is effective in meeting with the requirements of the beneficiaries and paying the monthly stipend as expected.	31.1	52.5	12.4	4.0	427	3.11	Agree
2.	The N-power programme is addressing issues of youth unemployment and helping increase social development in the country.	19.9	51.1	25.1	4.0	427	2.87	Agree
3.	The N-power programme is impacting the lives of ordinary Nigerians and even at the grass root level of society	12.2	42.6	35.1	10.1	427	2.57	Agree
4	The programme has been effective in raising knowledge of entrepreneurial activities around the community.	28.1	52.2	17.3	2.3	427	3.06	Agree
5	The monthly stipend paid to N-power beneficiaries has increased the flow of money in the economy.	13.4	55.6	22.1	8.9	427	2.73	Agree
Mean (\bar{X}) of Response							3.41	Agree

Source: (Field Survey, 2022)

The result in Table 2 above shows that 83.60% of the total respondents were of the opinion that the program was effective in meeting their requirements on payment of the monthly stipend as expected, while 16.40% of the total respondents were on opposite opinion. The table also shows that 71% of the total responses indicated the program is addressing issues of youth unemployment and increasing social development in the country. In comparison, 29% of the total responses indicated their disagreement with the statement.



In regards to whether the program is impacting the lives of ordinary Nigerians and even at the grass root level of the society, a greater proportion of the sample accounts for 54.80% of the total responses indicated their agreement for the statement, while 45.20% of the total responses indicated their disagreement for the statement. Meanwhile, the table also reveals that the majority of the respondents, accounting for 80.30% of the sample, were of the opinion that the program has been effective in raising knowledge of entrepreneurial activities around the community, while 19.70% of the sample disagreed with the said statement. In addition, the table reveals that 69% of the total responses were of the opinion that the monthly stipend paid to beneficiaries has increased the flow of money in the economy, while 31.02% of the total responses indicated the opposite opinion in that regard.

Research Question 2

Does the social investment program (N-SIP) has any significant impact on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria?

In an attempt to answer research question two above, the frequency distribution, percentages and arithmetic mean (\bar{x}) of the responses for the impact of N-SIP as a social investment program on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria were analysed and discussed as shown in Table 3 below. The items were measured using five points Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, and the responses were obtained and analysed to answer research question two.

Table 3: Mean Responses of Respondents on the impact of N-SIP as a social investment programme on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	N	\bar{X}	DECISION
1.	The programme has provided me with an employment opportunity and a source of income.	29.5	53.2	15.5	1.9	427	3.10	Agree
2.	The N-power programme has provided me with the opportunity to acquire skills which are useful to me today	31.9	54.1	8.0	6.1	427	3.12	Agree
3.	I was paid stipends, and from these, I have been able to start up a business.	29.7	50.1	12.4	7.7	427	3.02	Agree
4.	The programme has provided access to resources which is an important predictor for opportunity-based entrepreneurs.	30.7	53.9	8.9	6.6	427	3.09	Agree
5.	The programme has created a source of livelihood for many Nigerians, thereby uplifting the economic life of people across strata of society.	50.4	40.7	6.8	2.1	427	3.39	Agree
Mean (\bar{X}) of Response							3.17	Agree

Source: (*Field Survey, 2022*)



Glancing at Table 3 above, it reveals that the highest proportion of the sample representing 82.70% of the total responses confirmed that the program had provided them with employment opportunities and sources of income. On the contrary, 17.30% of the total responses were of the opinion that the program has not provided them with employment opportunities and sources of income. The table also reveals that the majority of the responses in the sample representing 84.45% of the total responses, were of the opinion that the program has provided them with the opportunity to acquire skills that are useful, while 15.55% of the total responses exhibited a contrary opinion. Similarly, the table also reveals that 79.80% of the total responses indicated that from stipends paid to them, they were been able to start up their businesses. Meanwhile, 30.20% of the total responses indicated the opposite opinion.

In addition, the table shows that the majority of the respondents representing 84.60% of the total responses, indicated that the program has provided access to resources which is an important predictor for opportunity-based entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, 15.40% of the total responses indicated that the program had not provided access to resources which is an important predictor for opportunity-based entrepreneurs. Similarly, the table reveals a significant part of the sample representing 91.10% of the total responses, were of the opinion that the program has created a source of livelihood for many Nigerians and thereby uplifting the economic life of people across strata of the society. However, 8.90% of the total responses were of the contrary opinion the program had not created a source of livelihood for many Nigerians.

Test of the Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the social investment program (N-SIP) and beneficiaries' economic empowerment in Nigeria.

Table 4: Results of T-Test on the relationship between N-SIP as a social investment program and beneficiaries' economic empowerment in Nigeria.

N	\bar{X}	T	Level of sign.	Mean diff	P-Value	Decision
427	2.66	58.614	0.05	2.658	.000	Rejected

As presented in Table 4 above, the relationship between relationship between social investment program (N-SIP) and beneficiaries' economic empowerment in Nigeria was found to be positively significant at the 0.05 level of significance ($T = 58.614$, $\bar{X} = 2.66$, $P < 0.05$). The result showed that N-SIP as a social investment program has a significant impact of 58.61% (t-value) on the relationship with the beneficiaries' economic empowerment. Hence, the null hypothesis H₀ 1 is hereby rejected. This implies that N-SIP as a social investment program has impacted beneficiaries' economic empowerment in the country.

Hypothesis 2

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between social investment programs (N-SIP) and entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.



Table 5: Results of T-Test on the relationship between N-SIP as a social investment program and entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.

N	\bar{X}	T	Level of sign.	Mean diff	P-Value	Decision
427	3.09	67.892	0.05	2.891	.003	Rejected

The results in Table 5 above indicated the relationship between N-SIP as a social investment program and entrepreneurship development in Nigeria were found to be positively significant at the 0.05 level of significance (T-value = 67.892, \bar{X} = 3.09 P < 0.05). The table revealed that N-SIP as a social investment program has a significant impact of 67.89% (t- value) on the relationship with entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis H_0 2 is hereby rejected. This signifies that N-SIP, as a social investment program, has impacted entrepreneurship development in the country.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In response to research question 1, hypothesis one was tested using a t-test, and the result was presented in Table 4. The table disclosed the mean (\bar{X}) value of 2.66, which is within the accepted value of 2.5 and the above. The table also showed a P-value of 0.000, which is also less than the significant level of 0.05 indicated in the study. This indicated that N-SIP as a social investment program has a significant impact on the beneficiaries' economic empowerment in Nigeria. The results lead to the rejection of hypothesis one, which says that there is no significant relationship between social investment programs (N-SIP) and beneficiaries' economic empowerment in Nigeria. This finding is consistent with the findings of other similar studies (Gasaymeh & Jwaifell, 2013; Saleh, 2019; Ogujiuba & Ntombifuthi, 2022).

On the issue regarding whether N-SIP as a social investment program has any significant impact on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. As the findings in Table 5 revealed, the mean (\bar{X}) value of 3.09 is within the standard level of acceptance of 2.5 and above. So also, the P-value of .003 is equally less than the significant level of confidence of 0.05 accepted in the study. Hence, the acceptance of the t-value of 67.892, which means the program has contributed to about 67.89% of entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. This finding is in line with the opinions of Fonseca, Michaud & Sopraseuth (2007), Abu Husein, Al-Sukkar, Salah, & Jaradat (2013), Ahn & Kim (2015), Cecchini & Rico (2015) and Sakamoto, (2021).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it is logical to conclude that N-SIP as a social investment program has enormous impacts on beneficiaries' economic empowerment and entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. Therefore, the sustenance of the program will be of greater importance in solving the major problems of youth unemployment and persistent level of poverty and also serves as a catalyst for economic growth and development of the nation.



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