

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES AND POVERTY
REDUCTION: EVIDENCE FROM SOUTH-WEST IN NIGERIA

Ola Olusegun OYEDELE, PhD1 • Idris Olayiwola GANIYU, PhD2 • John Olawale
WILLOUGHBY, PhD3 • Ibrahim Olakunle ABDULGANIYU, Mr4

1,2,3,4 - Room1-118, M-Block, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.

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Abstract: Federal government employment initiatives have become tools of creating employment and reducing the rate of poverty amongst youths in today's generation. This study investigates the impact of federal government employment initiatives on poverty reduction in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. The survey method was adopted. The quantitative research design was employed. Marcos's (2019) Calculator and Raosoft (2019) calculator was used to determining the sample size. A sample of 120 respondents was identified from a population of 172 small and medium businesses within the study areas and 96.7% response rate was recorded. The primary method of data collection was used. A well-structured questionnaire was administered and responses were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation on SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 20. The survey demonstrates that micro-credit scheme has significant impact on standard of living ($P=0.000 < 0.05$; $r = 0.685$) and also empowerment initiatives has significant influences on job creations ($P = 0.000 < 0.05$; $r = 0.659$). Based on the results of findings, the study recommends that Government should increase the provision of sufficient microcredit/loan with very low loan interest rate; Government must ensure that its social investment programs, particularly the tradermoni is not politicized; Government should provide interest-free loans to interested volunteers to start up their small or medium scale enterprises.

Keywords: Federal Government, Employment Initiatives, Poverty Reduction, and Abeokuta Metropolis

INTRODUCTION

Poverty is a global phenomenon which affects continents, nations and people differently. It affects people in various depths and levels at different times and phases of existence. There is no nation that is absolutely free from poverty. Nigeria ranked among the 20th poorest countries, started its independence nationhood with poverty level of barely 15% of its population in 1960 and is today struggling to bring it down from about 71% of its current teeming population of about 180 million people (World Bank 2014).

Successive regimes in the country have initiated policies and programmes geared towards reducing the level of poverty. Two of such were the Agricultural Development Projects (ADP) of 1975 and Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and they were introduced by the Obasanjo regime. The objective of the programmes was to ensure that Nigerians have sufficient food to solve the hunger problem in Nigeria, which is referred as one of the elements of poverty reduction in the country. In 1980, the Shagari regime continued in this line by introducing the Green Revolution.

The Abacha regime established the Community Bank and Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF). The two programmes were targeted at reducing poverty from the polity, whether absolute or relative. During the democratic dispensation, in 2000, the Obasanjo regime created a Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP). PAP was introduced to urgently create a menial-based 200,000 jobs. The immediate objective was to mop up from the labour market, in the shortest time, some 200,000 unemployed persons in the face of increasingly restive youth.

Trader Moni is a loan initiative of the Federal Government, created specifically for small traders and artisans across Nigeria. It is a part of the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Program (GEEP) scheme of the Federal Government, being implemented by the Bank of Industry. With Trader Moni, you can receive interest-free loan starting from N10,000 and growing all the way to N100,000 as you pay back. You get N 10,000 as the first loan. When you pay back the first loan, you immediately qualify for a second loan of N 15,000. After payback

of the second loan, you are eligible for a N 20,000 loan, and then N 50,000, and then N100,000 (Trader Moni, 2019).

The Administration of President Muhammadu Buhari designed and implemented the ongoing National Social Investment Scheme (NSIP) as strategy for combating poverty and unemployment. The NSIP scheme was created to enable citizens exit from the twin evils of poverty and unemployment as earlier mentioned through capacity building, investment and direct financial support. The programme consists of four major components include the Job Creation and Youth Empowerment (N- Power), National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), National Cash Transfer Programme (NCTP) and Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP). National Social Investment Scheme (NSIP) generally aimed at increasing the poor and vulnerable household with access income/livelihood by providing access to targeted funds, thereby improving household ability to absorb economic shock.

This study therefore attempts to determine the successes or otherwise of this entrepreneurship programme hence, a major research question of this piece is can the Nigerian Federal Government's You WiN project tackle the country's high unemployment rate? To make this review process as comprehensive as possible, it is imperative to first and foremost carry out a conceptual clarification as well as establish an analytical framework to chart a direction for the work. The utilitarian theory of ethical conduct would best help to determine both the worthiness or otherwise as well as success or failure of the You Win governmental initiative to reduce unemployment and poverty amongst youths and young graduates in Nigeria.

Statement of Research Problem

The absence of basic infrastructure like health care system, water, education, electricity, lack of financial security and so on has worsened the poor state of Nigerians. More so, most Nigerians are engaged in Agricultural business, farming, small trading and other self-employed activities. This is due largely to insufficient capital to finance their businesses which lead to shortage of other basic infrastructure for acceptable standard of living.

Lack of access to financial capital required to engage in economic activities of profitable proportion. This stems from the inadequate access to financial capital or credit because of bottlenecks by the traditional financial institutions which make it very difficult for the low income earners to access fund and this will lead to lack of job opportunities among the small businesses in Nigeria (Abur and Torruam, 2012).

This problem will be determined whether empowerment initiative which was introduced by Federal Government such as Presidential Youth Empowerment Scheme (P-YES) which is one of the latest entrants among these developmental strategies explored as at the time of this discourse only had scanty literature and barely any critique on it.

Many small businesses does not have access to loan in all financial institution because of lack of collateral document to back up with the loan and this lead to high rate of poverty and unemployment in Nigeria and they rarely have bank accounts and are usually not interested or profitable to traditional lenders. They cannot access loans to trader, and they remain in a cycle of poverty. Federal government understands the plight of the over 20 million Nigerians small businesses and in dire needs of capital to grow their business through the equity grant by introducing trader moni which can ease your business cash problems and make your life better. The loan comes from recognition of the genuine contribution of petty traders to the growth of the nation's economy. Consequently, the loan will not only help the local traders to expand their businesses, but also change their standard of living, thus, aiding in poverty alleviation and stability in the country economic outlook. The loan aims at reducing short term poverty by direct cash transfer and fight long term poverty by increasing human capital among the poor through conditional cash transfer (Adekunle, 2018). This problem was to determine whether Cash transfer loan scheme has been a tool in reducing poverty incidence in Nigeria. Therefore, this research work intends to examine the extent of the impact of the cash transfer scheme through the Marketmoni in Abeokuta, Ogun state, Nigeria. Some of the important and activities under the marketmoni in Abeokuta include provision of training skill, working tools, vocational job and micro-credits for self-reliance, self-actualization and employment opportunity.

This problems has brought to light the desire to examine the effect of Federal Government employment initiatives on poverty reduction in Abeokuta Metropolis, Ogun State, Nigeria

LITERATURE FRAMEWORK – CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Micro Credit Scheme

Micro credit has to do with soft loans granted to small and medium scale entrepreneurs, farmers, artisans/craftsmen, and others forms of small business to enable them procure, produce or improve their productivity as well as increase their general welfare. According to Ugochukwu and Onochie (2017), micro credit leads to the establishment of cottage industries, livestock farming, fish ponds and piggery. Micro credit could lead to real successful farming to the extent of export and promotion of agricultural products. Ugochukwu and Onochie (2017) focused on financial sector and strengthening the powerful but often untapped entrepreneurs' spirit existing in society around the world. It is aimed at empowering the power and the low income earners by engaging them in profitable economic activities, live better lives and contribute to nation building.

Empowerment Initiative

Empowerment has no clear definition. (Bookman and Morgen, 1984) Most people narrowly use the term; the concept is not defined by some others at all. Thus, many see the concept as nothing more than the most recently popular buzz word to be thrown in to making sure old programs get new funding. However, empowerment is much more than that (Bailey, 1992). Empowerment is a process that challenges our assumptions about the way things are and can be. It challenges our basic assumptions about power, helping, achieving, and succeeding. To begin to demystify the concept of empowerment, we need to understand the concept broadly in order to be clear about how and why we narrow our focus of empowerment for specific programs and projects and to allow discussion of empowerment across disciplines and practice lines. At the core of the concept of empowerment is the idea of power (Bailey, 1992).

A common understanding of empowerment is necessary, however, to allow us to know empowerment when we see it in people with whom we are working, and for program evaluation. How we precisely define empowerment within our projects and programs will depend upon the specific people and context involved. As a general definition, however, we suggest that empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives (Bailey, 1992). It is a process that fosters power in people, for use in their own lives, their communities, and in their society, by acting on issues that they define as important. We suggest that three components of our definition are basic to any understanding of empowerment. Empowerment is multi-dimensional, social, and a process. It is multi-dimensional in that it occurs within sociological, psychological, economic, and other dimensions. Empowerment also occurs at various levels, such as individual, group, and community. Empowerment, by definition, is a social process, since it occurs in relationship to others. Empowerment is a process that is similar to a path or journey, one that develops as we work through it. Other aspects of empowerment may vary according to the specific context and people involved, but these remain constant. In addition, one important implication of this definition of empowerment is that the individual and community are basically involved.

Youth Empowerment Initiatives

A youth is any individual within the age of eighteen and thirty five years irrespective of gender (Okoye, 2012). Empowerment can be seen as the means of assisting, helping or encouraging people. Youth empowerment in a nutshell is the means through which the youths of any country are assisted to succeed in life. It is shameful that when youth empowerment is mentioned, people think that it is only the function of the government to empower the youths. This is not so, you as an individual, can empower the people around you. Youth Empowerment is defined as an attitudinal, structural, and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability and authority to make decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of others (Kpaley, 2013). Generally, some people understand youth empowerment as the means through which the youth are encouraged financially or skillfully. The word, empowerment, is used on everyday life of people. Youth empowerment is beyond these two, it involves a lot more ranging from all those activities that will transform the youth into a better individual. Youth empowerment is the outcome by which youth, as change agents, gain the skills to impact their own lives and lives

of other individuals, organizations and communities (Obi, 2012). The definition of youth is dependent of any particular nation as some have the definition as lady or young man between the age of 18 and forty. Youth empowerment can be viewed from both individual and organizational level, at the individual level it is exercising power over ones' life by being skilled, critically aware, and active in creating community change. At the organizational level is the implementation of a culture, vision, and system that supports youth empowerment at the individual level (Abadua, 2012). Continuing, youth empowerment can be seen as having a three-pronged approach that effectively engages young people in work that challenges them to develop skills, gain critical awareness, and participate in opportunities that are necessary for creating community change:

- Skill Development: The process of strengthening the skills of youth so that they know how to effectively make decisions, positively interact with their peers, and act as community advocates.
- Critical Awareness: The process of providing youth with the information and resources necessary for analyzing issues that affect their lives and environments as well as strategize on ways to act as change agents in their communities.
- Opportunities: The process of providing youth with platforms for decision-making and encouraging their active participation in creating community change (Abadua, 2012).

Youth empowerment is of good importance to both nations and the empowered. With youth empowerment, the future prosperity of nations is secured because these are the people that are, and will take care of many offices and functions in the country. There are youths who are running many managerial positions in many institutes. There are also those who are going to manage top offices in the future in accordance with the popular statement "the youths are the leaders of tomorrow". Statistically Nigeria has a youth population of about 67 million, aged between 15 and 35 years. 42.2% of these young people don't have a means of livelihood while only 20% have more than the secondary school certificate. These figures reveal that majority of the youths in our country find it hard to make ends meet calling for the need for effective youth empowerment programmes and strategies in the country. Youth empowerment can be highlighted under the following classifications: Financial youth empowerment; Academic/ Educational Youth Empowerment; Moral Youth Empowerment; Agricultural Youth Empowerment; Skills Acquisition Youth Empowerment (Abadua, 2012). No nation can do without empowering their youths (Njoku and Okezie, 2011). This is so because the youths of today are elders of tomorrow. All should empower the youths. The importance of youth empowerment is outlined thus: Poverty eradication; Good education standard; Good governance; Crime reduction; National Growth; Security and Technological Development (Kpaley, 2013).

Prospects of Trader Moni on Poverty Reduction

With reports crowning Nigeria as the world poverty capital, any scheme with the aims of reducing poverty in the country is worthy of evaluation. This is beyond the separation of yet another waste of capital or cynical as forms of making more effective of poverty for political gains. Unlike similar schemes in the past YouWin, SURE-P e.t.c which targeted at the small and medium enterprises, the tradermoni is for the micro business operators, who are at the lowest rank in the economic system (Bank of Industry (BOI), 2018). This segment of the society capital worth less than Ten thousand naira (#10,000) or require an amount of less than Ten thousand naira (#10,000) to established the business. Financial inclusion is a relevant determinant of access to finance. In Nigeria, about 65% of the population cannot have access to the traditional financial institutions and as such are excluded from the financial system. Ardic Heimann& Nataliya (2011) maintained that the reasons for the increasing percentage of the population excluded from the financial system are connected with educational system, gender, age, irregular income, regulations and geographical Areas. These have together contributed to the short of access to financial services.

The tradermoni micro-credit scheme is modeled to frontally deal with those cumbersome? It is initiated to provide two million initial beneficiaries access to small loans without the bother and barriers associated with traditional financial system. According to the Nigerian Vice-President, Osibanjo, the initiative will increase the level of financial inclusion in the economy. Inclusion of the initial two million into the financial system will generate multiple economic activities, cause growth in national output and eventually reduce poverty (Osibanjo, 2019).

Furthermore, the scheme has the potential of increasing capital accumulation by the applicants. Additional capital to increase the stocks by the applicants will amount to extra profit beyond their survival expenditure. According to Hague (2009), micro credit creates and enhances methods that have resulted in high rate of savings mobilization, ability to nurture a culture of commitment and self-reliance among low income employees. In the awareness of the prospects of tradermoni, about fifteen billion (#15,000,000,000) is embarked for the initial capital of the scheme. The amount though not enough will contribute in reducing the financial gap in the micro business segment of the economy. According to the Central Bank of Nigeria (2018) reported that financial gap in the Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises (MSMEs) segment of the economy is one hundred and fifty-eight billion dollars (\$158 billion) which is totally equal to forty-eight trillion naira (#48 trillion). Therefore, a sustained implementation of tradermoni and other economic and social intervention programmes can obliterate this huge gap that has made inclusive economic growth and development elusive in Nigeria. However, OXFAM (2018) maintained that poverty and income inequality in Nigeria is not due to lack of resources, but to the ill-use, misallocation and misappropriation of such resources by the political elites. It further recommended that government must free millions of people from poverty by building a new economic and political system that ensures access to national resources by all. Implicitly, tradermoni is one of the solution in which resources can be redistributed to bridge the alarming income inequality gap prevailing in the country today. Social safety nets like the tradermoni can afford poor families to access to invest their capital in the productive activities that will improve the health and general well-being of the family.

Impact of Tradermoni Scheme

On 7th August, 2018, the Federal Government commenced the tradermoni scheme in Lagos. Tradermoni scheme is designed to help small business owners expand their trade through the provision of collateral free loans of an initial sum of ten thousand naira (#10, 000). The scheme was launched in partnership with the Bank of Industry (BOI), in order to enlarge government's financial inclusion agenda down to the grassroots, the bottom of the ladder, considering the contribution of small traders to economic development of the nation. It is a Federal Government empowerment scheme to help in reducing the poverty rate in Nigeria by empowering traders and artisans. Tradermoni is similar to MarketMoni which is another cash transfer loan scheme of the Federal Government under the same Social Investment Programs, but they are not the same. While Marketmoni loans start at fifty thousand naira (#50, 000) and target medium-scale traders, market women, artisans, and youths in market associations, but one cannot wish away the impact it will have on the fufu seller on the street whose capital is N 30,000. As little as it seems, an added sum of ten thousand naira (#10,000) to her business and serving more customers (Adekunle, 2018).

Implementation Challenges of Tradermoni

Since the inauguration of the tradermoni has been initiated in country, there has been increasing concerns regarding the capacity of the scheme to reduce poverty among the low income earners. Stakeholders and particularly critics of the President Buhari Administration are more apprehensive on the timing and sustainability of the scheme. For instance, the Transparency International says the implementation of the scheme is suspicious. The organization's Director in Nigeria argued "it was not done three years ago but only started close to election time, this is clearly a case of vote buying using public fund" (Leadership Newspaper, Nov.25, 2018).

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo also tagged the scheme "an outright idiotic programme" with something sinister about the programme that is tied to a plot to rig the election by collecting the voters' cards Number of beneficiaries (The Cable, January 20, 2019). The Senate President, Bukola Saraki have also alleged that the programme is a sophisticated vote buying. It is very difficult to extricate the genuine intention of the administration to reduce poverty through this scheme and the accusation of vote buying due to the timing. Furthermore, the scheme is intended for micro business owners, artisans and those seeking very little initial capital to established a small business which the inventory is not more than ten thousand naira (#10,000). These categories of business are predominant in the rural areas, but the scheme was being launched in urban markets. In the urban markets, most businesses are well over ten thousand naira (#10,000) inventories, these further gives concerns regarding the target population for the loan and the actual beneficiaries.

Another huge challenge of the scheme is paucity of data, weak institution to ensure the programme is efficiently managed to the benefits of the target poor population devoid of corruption, cronyism, fraud and obscurity. It was

speculated that agents were demanding two thousand naira (#2000) before the fund is transferred to the applicants (Leadership Newspaper, November 25, 2018). The aim of tradermoni is to reduce poverty especially among the lower income earners. But a profound examination of the scheme proves otherwise. For instance, the loan amount is very little and cannot guarantee high turnover rate of return on investment. Profit margin from such amount will be very insignificant to lift applicants from poverty. With a high dependency ratio of 88.2% percent, there is a high propensity for the beneficiaries to spend greater part of profits from their trade on household consumptions.

N-Power Scheme

N-Power Programme: Worried by the seemingly recalcitrance of the youth unemployment challenge, the current change administration of President Muhammadu Buhari pledged to tackle the menace head-on. Hence, on 8 June, 2016 the Federal Government of Nigeria launched the N-Power Programme as a job creation and empowerment initiative of the Social Investment Programme to drastically reduce youth unemployment and poverty in the country. The focus is to provide young graduates and non-graduates with the skills, tools and livelihood to enable them advance from unemployment to employment, entrepreneurship and innovation.

The first phase of N-Power is targeted at Nigeria's critical needs in education, agriculture, technology, creativity, construction and artisans industries. N-Power is also meant to prepare Nigeria for a global outsourcing push where young Nigerians can export their services to work on global projects that earn Nigeria foreign exchange. The N-Power Volunteer Corps is expected to engage and train 500,000 young unemployed graduates. It is a paid volunteering programme of a-two-year duration. Participants will provide teaching, instructional, and advisory solutions in 4 key areas namely, agriculture, health, power-tech and community education (FGN, 2018).

The programme is carefully designed in such a manner that if well implemented, can help in further addressing the challenges of unemployment and subsequently, reduce poverty among the Nigerian youths. The question is would this programme be free from the pangs of those factors that militated against the efficacy of the past poverty reduction programmes? This question must be well addressed if the government indeed, wants to tackle the challenges of unemployment and subsequently, reduce poverty in the Nigerian society (Analysts).

N-Power is a scheme under the National Social Investments Programme of the Nigerian Federal Government geared towards job creation; alleviate poverty and empowerment initiatives through volunteering services. It is also aimed at imbibing on Nigerian youths the learn-work entrepreneurship culture between the ages of 18-35 (FGN, 2018).

Microcredit Scheme and Poverty Reduction

Plethora of literature shows that microcredit schemes are potent tool for poverty reduction across the world (Izugbara, 2004). However, in Nigeria, the benefits of microcredit schemes are yet to be fully realized. According to Iheduru (2002), the efficacy of microcredit schemes in alleviating poverty in Nigeria has been very minimal largely because of lack of federal government and other operative's commitments.

Ottong (2006) and Agba et al (2009) posit that poverty has been prevalent in Nigeria, meaning that Federal Government efforts have failed to reduce poverty in the country. Reasons adduced for the failure of microcredit schemes in reducing poverty include the experimental attitude of government, lack of proper implementation, poor funding, lack of experts, and lack of continuity. Others are programme hijacking by few elites, illiteracy, corruption and lack of sincerity of purpose.

Over the years, federal government because of the disadvantage groups has set significant number of public sector funded credit schemes. These include – Small Scale Industries Credit Scheme (SSICS), Federal Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), Small Medium Enterprises Loan Scheme (SIMES) (Okafor, 2006). These schemes according to Hague (2000) offers small loans to the poor to either initiate or expand income-generating activities in order to improve the livelihood of this disadvantaged group. Microcredit schemes create and enhance procedures that have resulted to high rates of savings mobilizations, ability to nurture a culture of commitment and self-reliance among low-income workers.

Challenges of Microcredit Schemes in Nigeria

Microcredit scheme in Nigeria is bedeviled by a number of factors. These factors include corruption, lack/inadequate awareness, lack of collateral, poor loan repayments, sociocultural practices, and limited numbers of microfinance branches, poor staffing, and poor business proposals. Others are poor business strategies, ineffective regulatory oversight, improper planning, and limited financial base of microfinance institutions. It includes poor access to land and poor monitoring and evaluations by top ranking stakeholders (Omorodion, 2007; Nwigwe, Omonona and Okoruwa, 2012).

Corruption is a single major obstacle to microcredit schemes implementation in Nigeria. It undermines the goals of microcredit schemes and weakens the effectiveness of social institutions that could have enabled the efficacy of microcredit schemes in the country. It is largely responsible for the failure of social policies and programmes that would have graduated poor households from poverty (Agba, and Ushie, 2012).

Inadequate personnel constitute a high profile challenge to microcredit schemes in Nigeria. Agba and Ushie (2012) observed that lack of technical staff and well experienced personnel impedes the smooth running of socio-economic programmes that are meant to alleviate poverty among a large number of poverty stricken Nigerians. Omorodion (2007) posits that limited number of microfinance institutions limit the effectiveness of microcredit schemes; as supposed, beneficiaries have to travel a great deal of distances before accessing the services of microfinance banks/microcredit institutions. Other challenges to the scheme include lack of voice or advocacy from the end of the disadvantaged groups in Nigeria.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted quantitative data analysis for this study; the survey research design was employed. The scope of the study covers Abeokuta Metropolis, Ogun State, Nigeria. The respondents who are owners of businesses in the areas were purposively randomly selected in order to accomplish the objective of the study. Primary method of data collection was used for this study through a field survey of businesses with the aid of purposive well-structured questionnaires. The questionnaires instrument was designed using five (5) likert’s scale, as well as through an in-depth personal interview guided by the questions raised in the questionnaire which proved to be most effective due to the fact that most respondents could not fill in their responses or due to time constraints. A sample of 120 respondents was identified from a population of 172 small and medium businesses within the study area using random sampling method of MarcorS.S (2019) Calculator and Raosoft (2019) calculator based on reports of the number of small and medium businesses in the study area and approximately 96.7% of the administered questionnaires were retrieved. Each of the dependent and independent variables of the research construct were measured by four (4) items each validated by different authors found in extant literature. Pre-test was also constructed through a pilot study which was carried out for the research instrument’s validity. Split half method of reliability test results on the split halves 0.734 and 0.864 respectively show that research instrument is reliable (Garson, 2009).

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Pearson Product Moment Correlation via SPSS 20.0 was used to test the research hypotheses and analyze the dependent and independent variables.

Hypothesis 1

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between Micro credit scheme and standard of living.

HA₁: There is a significant relationship between micro credit scheme and standard of living.

Table 1. Correlations of Micro Credit Scheme and Standard of Living

	Micro Credit Scheme	Standard of Living
Micro Credit Scheme	1	.685**
Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)		.000

	N	116	116
	Pearson Correlation	.685**	1
Standard of Living	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	116	116

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table shows that micro credit scheme is independently and positively correlated with standard of living and also highly significant at 1% level. As a result, the alternative hypothesis 1 of this study was accepted due to a correlation value ($r = 0.685$).

The above result implies that there is a significant impact between micro credit scheme and standard of living i.e. since our r value (0.685) is positive and highly significant. Thus, the decision would be to reject null hypothesis (H_0) and accept alternative hypothesis (H_1), i.e. there is a significant impact between micro credit scheme and standard of living.

Hypothesis 2

HO₂: Empowerment initiative does not have significant influence on job creations in Nigeria.

HA₂: Empowerment initiative has significant influence on job creations in Nigeria.

Table 2: Correlations of Empowerment Initiative and Job Creations

		Empowerment Initiatives	Job Creation
Empowerment Initiatives	Pearson Correlation	1	.659**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	116	116
Job Creation	Pearson Correlation	.659**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	116	116

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.3.13 shows that empowerment initiative is independently and positively correlated with job creations and also highly significant at 1% level. As a result, the alternative hypothesis 1 of this study was accepted due to a correlation value ($r = 0.659$).

Decision

The above result implies that there is a significant influence between empowerment initiatives and job creations i.e. since our r value (0.659) is positive and high significant. Thus, the decision would be to reject null hypothesis (H_0) and accept alternative hypothesis (H_1), i.e. there is a significant influence between empowerment initiatives and job creation.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study empirically investigates the impact of Federal Government employment initiatives on poverty reduction an evidence of Abeokuta Metropolis, Ogun State. It provided evidence on how micro credit schemes and empowerment initiatives affects and influence standard of living and job creation specifically small and medium businesses, in the study area in Ogun State, Nigeria.

The hypothesis one result implies that there is a significant impact between micro credit scheme and standard of living i.e. since our r value (0.685) is positive and highly significant. Thus, the decision would be to reject null hypothesis (H_0) and accept alternative hypothesis (H_1), i.e. there is a significant impact between micro credit scheme and standard of living. This finding is consistent with previous study Agboeze and Onwuka (2014); World

Economic Forum (2005) & Mohan (2006).

Financial inclusion affords several benefits to the consumer, regulator and the economy alike. The establishment of an account relationship between the tradermoni beneficiaries and the banks can pave the way for the customers to avail the benefits of a variety of financial products which are not only standardized but also provided by institutions that are regulated. In essence, access to finance through tradermoni could open more opportunities to the beneficiaries to access credits, insure their business in a regulated financial system.

The hypothesis two results imply that there is a significant influence between empowerment initiatives and job creations i.e. since our r value (0.659) is positive and high significant. Thus, the decision would be to reject null hypothesis (H_0) and accept alternative hypothesis (H_1), i.e. there is a significant influence between empowerment initiatives and job creation. This finding is consistent with previous study Anyebe (2016) & FGN, (2018). The goals of the programme include; reducing the rate of unemployment in the country, facilitate the transfer of entrepreneurial, technical skills and employability ability and to bring solution active public service and government diversification policy.

CONCLUSION

Federal Government employment initiatives have assumed a great significance in the present day's context among youth in Abeokuta Metropolis. In view of the importance of awareness of the Federal Government employment initiatives on the poverty reduction, it therefore becomes expedient to examine how Federal Government employment initiatives affect the poverty reduction. Federal government employment initiatives (micro credit, cash transfer loan, equity grants and empowerment initiatives) affecting Poverty reduction were looked into. It was however.

It was however discovered that Federal Government employment initiatives is not the only factor that determines Poverty reduction, but to a large extent affect Poverty reduction, and that other factors, most especially exogenous variables such as economy, entrepreneurial development factors (skill acquisition, innovative and creativity), and the political environment all influence the poverty reduction rate.

To this end, it is high time for young small and medium scale enterprises owners/entrepreneurs attach more importance and pay attention to the areas of Federal Government employment initiatives as federal government employment initiatives grants loan and to a large extent positively affects Poverty reduction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having discussed the findings of the study, summary and conclusion, it then becomes germane to put forward some important recommendations that will help to reduce the poverty rate in relation to Federal Government employment initiatives. These include;

1. Government should increase provision of sufficient microcredit/loan with very low interest rate if not zero-interest rate, in order to make employment initiatives more meaningful to alleviate poverty among the youth.
2. Government must ensure that its social investment programmes, particularly the tradermoni is not politicized. This will not guarantee the sustainability of the programmes.
3. Government should introduce mandatory training and workshops especially in areas such as ICT and agriculture for volunteers to increase their employability after the expiration of the scheme.
4. The federal government should ensure that an initiative like this is enshrined in our constitution because this is one of the programs by this government that has actually empowered and touched the poor masses financially or otherwise without knowing or having connection with someone in government.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The study's limitations and recommendations that are deduced from the findings suggest more avenues for future research. This study places emphasis on the impact of micro credit scheme and empowerment initiatives on poverty reduction, but does not explain the impact of cash transfer scheme and unemployment reduction both of which are germane in Federal Government employment initiatives discourse on poverty reduction. Another

limitation is the use of questionnaire and a cross sectional study approach. A number of creative methods (in-depth interviews, case study and so on) and use of a longitudinal study could be used in the future for research purposes. Lastly, further researches like the impact of entrepreneurship bank on small and medium scale enterprises should be intensities and worked upon to expand the theoretical opinionating of the subject matter.

Also, the You-Win connect programme that was re-launched by the federal government in 2018 and 2019, should be sustained to assist the ever mass graduating students to be gaining fully employed by the scheme's funding abilities which is more pronounced in the area of crowd funding, angel investors and co-operatives and thrifts association.

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