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**Contribution of National Open Apprenticeship Scheme of the National Directorate of Employment to self-employment among youths in Kaduna state**

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**Abstract**

*This study aimed at assessing the contribution of National Open Apprenticeship Scheme of the National Directorate of Employment to self-employment among youths in Kaduna state from 2017 to 2022. Survey research design was adopted using primary data collected via the use of questionnaires. The hypothesis of the study stated in null form is: The National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS) has not significantly contributed to self-employment among youths in Kaduna State. This hypothesis was tested using Regression Analysis of SPSS Version 23.0 and the result revealed among others, that The National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS) has significantly contributed to self-employment among youths in Kaduna State and that the monitoring activities of the National Directorate of Employment has also helped many beneficiaries of the scheme to become self-employed after the training. In line with the findings, the study recommended that efforts be put in place by the National Directorate of Employment to raise public awareness about the scheme as this will enlighten government at all levels, non-governmental organizations, religious institutions, as well as free-will donors to support the youths with start-up capital and resources.*

**Keywords:** NDE, NOAS, Self-employment, Skill acquisition, Youths.

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**1. Introduction**

Economic growth is needed to boost revenue and improve the welfare of citizens in a country, but growth alone is not enough. To ensure sustainable development, growth that engenders rapid job creation is needed. World Bank (2018) noted that developing countries will need to create 600 million additional jobs by 2030 to keep up with the rising population. The World Bank also stressed that it is paramount for countries to train their citizens in skill acquisition needed to succeed in the modern economy.

Africa, and Nigeria in particular is aware that skills acquisition and self-employment gives people the means to lift themselves out of poverty, which in turn helps make countries more stable economically and socially. Nigerian government at all levels is increasing efforts to strengthen skills acquisition and entrepreneurship to reduce

the rate of unemployment in the country (Sunday, Vonke & Kromtit, 2014).

The abundant human and natural resources of Nigeria is yet to translate into commensurate development, mainly because of the inability of the nation to efficiently transform her many endowments into meaningful development and it leads to a huge waste of precious resources, mainly the human resources (Ajayi, 2018). The waste of human resources in Nigeria is seen in the increasing rate of unemployment especially among the youth, who are unemployed either due to limited opportunities or due to the lack of skills to exploit the available opportunities.

The National Bureau of Statistics (2022) asserted that 63 % equating 133 million of persons living within Nigerian are multidimensionally poor. This high rate of poverty in Nigeria can be traced among other reasons to the few employment

opportunities in the country as compared to her population, especially for the teeming youths among whom the unemployment rate is unfortunately too high.

Facing the reality of the rates of unemployment in Nigeria which increased from 2.0 % in 1960 to 4.5 % in 1970 and 8.5% in 1985, the Federal Government of Nigeria saw the need for immediate intervention. A committee known as the Chukwuma Committee was set up on the 26th of March 1986 to devise appropriate strategies to curb the rising rate of unemployment in the country. The report of the committee led to the establishment of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in November 1986.

The mandates of the Directorate are as follows: to design and implement programmes and schemes to tackle mass unemployment, to formulate policies aimed at developing programmes with labour intensive potentials, to obtain and maintain a database of vacancies and employment opportunities in the country to serve as a link between job seekers and government agencies and to implement any other policy as may be laid down from time to time by the Directorate (NDE, 2022).

The policy thrust of the National Directorate of Employment is self-employment as against wage employment. This policy is portrayed in the programmes of the Directorate, namely: Vocational Skills Development, Rural Employment Promotion, Small Scale Enterprise and Special Public Works (NDE, 2022). Each programme is divided into several schemes for proper administration.

The National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS) is one of the key schemes of the Directorate under the Vocational Skills Development. The scheme focuses on unskilled, and unemployed citizens to equip and train them with relevant skills such as hair dressing, haircut, fashion design, etc. by training them under master crafts men and women.

The Directorate started operating in Kaduna State in the year 1987. The NDE has enjoyed continuous funding since inception unlike other programmes (such as SURE-P, YOUWIN) targeted at tackling the unemployment challenge in the country. However, the labour force statistics released by NBS (2020) reveals that in Q4 2020, Kaduna State recorded the highest rate of unemployment among the North-Western states.

Hence, this study seeks to find out the contribution of the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme of the NDE to promoting self-employment among youths in Kaduna State from 2017 to 2022. This scheme was chosen because it has instant employment generation capacity. The study period was selected because 2017, the start of the study period, was the year immediately after the economic recession of 2016, and the study also focused on the youths because they happen to be the worst hit by the unemployment crisis in Nigeria.

### **1.1 Objective and Hypothesis of the study**

The objective of this study is to assess the contribution of the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) to self-employment among youths in Kaduna State. The hypothesis stated in null form is: The National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS) has not significantly contributed to self-employment among youths in Kaduna State.

## **2. Literature Review**

The literature review of this study is divided into two: conceptual clarification and theoretical framework. These can be seen as follows.

### **2.1 The concept of Self-employment**

Aldrich (2017) defines self-employment as a form of employment that is not portrayed in employee-employer relations. He further opined that self-employment could enhance economic development through its direct impact on income and wealth, and indirect

impact on social and human capital. He sees self-employment as a vital tool in increasing wealth mobility, which is an asset to any nation.

Self-employment is a type of employment in which an individual employs oneself and generates income directly from clients or customers by providing goods or rendering services to people. Ahmed (2016) is of a similar view as he defines self-employment as one of the classifications of employment in which an individual is not answerable to an employer because he owns his business and can be an employer himself.

Johnson (2021) presents the following as some of the benefits of self-employment to an individual: Unlimited income potential, lower cost of administration, flexibility and less bureaucracy. As noted by Adamczyk, Morawski and Neneman (2018), the following are some of the benefits of self-employment to the society: Reduction in the rate of unemployment, reduction in crime rate, increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and increase in innovation and creativity.

## **2.2 The concept of Skill Acquisition**

Skill acquisition may be defined as the process of accessing, learning or developing the ability to do something. Umunadi (2014) asserts that skill acquisition refers to the inculcation of practical skills and knowledge in any vocational and technical field of study. In the educational system of Nigeria, he argues that skill acquisition can be achieved through technical and vocational education that focuses on teaching, practical lessons, training and retraining.

According to Johnson (2021), skill acquisition is the impartation of knowledge through training that is aimed at instilling the mindset of entrepreneurship in individuals needed for development. He argues that giving individuals the opportunity to acquire knowledge for self-sustenance in the economy will promote their confidence in any workplace. Smith (2019) asserted that there is a strong link

between skill acquisition and economic growth.

Acquisition of skill targets the reduction of unemployment through empowerment and vocational training. Trainees enrolled in skill acquisition programmes acquire knowledge that are designed to equip them with job-specific skills with the goal of making them marketable and active in labour force participation. One of the aims of skill acquisition in Nigeria is to develop the citizens to such an extent that technological advancement will not be hindered by lack of capable hands in organizations (Umunadi, 2014).

## **2.3 The concept of National Open Apprenticeship Scheme**

This is a scheme of the NDE in which beneficiaries are attached to master-crafts men and women in different trades who train them to start up their own trades. The scheme is targeted at unskilled and unemployed citizens both male and female to equip and up skill them with relevant demand driven skills.

The National Open Apprenticeship Scheme, according to Chikwe and Biriowu (2019), is a skill acquisition scheme designed to help in the training of unemployed youths, such as school dropouts, to inculcate in them marketable skills that will help them find meaningful employment upon completion. Ajayi (2018) asserts that in the operation of NOAS, applicants are given forms to fill to indicate their educational background, vocation of interest and location and this implies that largely, the beneficiaries of the scheme have a choice as to what trade he or she wants to learn.

## **2.4 The concept of Unemployment**

The National Bureau of Statistics (2015) defines unemployment as the “proportion of those in the labour force (not in the entire economic active population nor the entire Nigerian population) who were actively looking for work but could not find work

for at least 20 hours in a week to the total currently active (labour force) population. Thompson & Rita (2016) is of the view that unemployment is a clear indicator of the economic status of a nation as it points out the likelihood of citizens to contribute to the productive output of the economy; the more the unemployed citizens, the lower the economic production is likely to be. They further assert that the economy of any nation will produce near full capacity, maximize output and have a good standard of living if the rate of unemployment is low. The International Labour Organization (ILO) clarified that three guidelines certify the definition of unemployment, they are (i) not working (ii) currently available for work (iii) seeking work. In congruent to this submission, Badamosi cited in Ajayi (2018) defines unemployment as a state in which adult citizens who are fit, available and willing to work do not get any job to do.

### 2.5 Theoretical Framework

This work is anchored on the Theory of Youth Empowerment because it gives a clear picture of the themes of this study. The theory of youth empowerment was propounded by Ledford, Lucas, Daraighi and Ravelli in 2013. The theory states that the field of youth empowerment has two levels: the process level, and the outcome level. The process or *empowering level* provides opportunities for youths to develop skills and become agents of positive change in the society. The outcome or the *empowered level* points to the result of the empowerment process, including the results of the efforts to gain control in the community and the products of interventions designed to empower participants.

Marc A. Zimmerman, a great researcher in the field of empowerment describes the main distinction between developing a youth and empowering a youth. Zimmerman (2000) asserted that developing a youth is centred on improving the capacity of the individual youth while

empowering a youth focuses on creating an enabling environment that promotes the individual capacity of youths.

The theory of youth empowerment connects the growth of a citizen with the larger social and political environment, and suggests that citizens generally need to become productive in the community in order to improve their lives, organisations and communities (Ledford, Lucas, Daraighi, & Ravelli, 2013).

In Kaduna state, this theory holds true that empowering youths is beneficial to the youths and the larger society. As stated in the theory, empowering a youth goes beyond developing a youth as we need to do more than developing the individuals, but also creating enabling environment in the community. The NDE skills acquisition schemes are geared towards greater community change and that is why they attach beneficiaries to master trainers and, in some cases, provide start-up kits to many beneficiaries to encourage them put their acquired skills into meaningful services immediately.

The process or *empowering level* is related to the activities of the NDE skills acquisition schemes such as NOAS in inculcating the necessary skills into the youths. The outcome or *empowered level* shows us the results of the empowerment process in terms of the effects of the interventions that have been designed to empower the youths, and these interventions have promoted self-employment among the youths in the state.

### 2.6 Empirical Review

Ajayi (2018) assessed the contribution of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) to unemployment reduction in Ekiti State with focus on National Open Apprenticeship Scheme between 2011 and 2015. Data were sourced from both primary and secondary sources. The study obtained secondary data from NDE annual reports and obtained primary data via the use of questionnaires and interviews. The

hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Correlation of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) at 0.05 level of significance. The results of the tested hypothesis revealed that the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme of the NDE had significantly contributed to unemployment reduction in Ekiti State and recommended that the directorate extend its activities to more rural areas to widen the coverage.

Omofonmwan and Chukwuedo (2013) carried out an assessment on the adequacy of resources for skills acquisition in maintenance of digital electronics for the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme in Edo State. The researchers employed descriptive survey research design and used standard deviation in analysing data. The findings of the study revealed that the machineries and equipment needed in proper training of beneficiaries of the scheme were not sufficient and were not provided at all by the government in some cases; however, human resources were available. The study recommended that state and local governments should unanimously join the federal government to run the scheme.

Medugu, Abdulhakim and Bashir (2017) assessed the availability and adequacy of training facilities of Electrical/Electronic Trade at National Directorate of Employment's Skills Acquisition Centres in Adamawa State. The study covered three Local Government Areas namely: Michika, Mayo Belwa and Yola South. The researchers employed descriptive survey design and collected data with a list of 100 items from three respondents which were the centre managers using questionnaires. The results showed that the facilities at the training centres were not available as required by NDE minimum standard. They recommended that all the skills acquisition centres in the area of study should be appropriately equipped with the needed quality and quantity of training facilities.

Ajala and Adewole (2016) in their study examined the impact of NDE Micro Business Skills Training schemes on youth empowerment for productivity in Oyo State. The study used questionnaire to gather data from 450 youths who were beneficiaries of NDE and found out that there is a significant impact of NDE Micro Business Skills Training Scheme on youth empowerment in Oyo State.

Ahmed (2016) assessed the impact of the National Directorate of Employment on job creation in Plateau State with focus on Environmental Beautification Training Scheme. The objectives of the study were to identify and examine the extent to which the NDE's skills acquisition programmes have affected job creation in Plateau State, assess the effectiveness of training centre facilities and the funding pattern of skills training programmes on job creation in Plateau State. The study employed survey research design and sourced primary and secondary data. The data were analyzed using Chi-Square on SPSS. The study found that the skills acquisition programmes of the NDE have done little in reducing unemployment in the State, and recommended that the government of Nigeria should properly implement the skills acquisition programmes of the NDE by committing more resources to gain more coverage in reducing unemployment in Plateau State.

Generally, the empirical review revealed that the findings on National Directorate of Employment and employment generation are not uniform. While some studies found that the programmes and schemes of National Directorate of Employment have had insignificant effect on job creation (Medugu, Abdulkarim & Bashir, 2017; Ahmed, 2016; Omofonwan & Chukwuedo, 2013), others found that the programmes and schemes of National Directorate of Employment have had significant effect on job creation (Ajayi, 2018; Ajala & Adewole, 2016).

The reason for these diverse findings is connected to the variables covered under

study, differences in methodology employed by the researchers and period covered. Therefore, this study is an improvement on the previous studies on NDE and the creation of employment in Nigeria having identified the gap in the existing literature.

Many of the studies reviewed covered employment generally but this study focuses on self-employment which is the policy thrust of the National Directorate of Employment. A focus on self-employment makes employment generation measurable since we can get the number of self-employed beneficiaries who are now entrepreneurs because of the knowledge they got from NDE skills acquisition schemes. In addition, while previous studies focused on NDE as a whole, this study focused on a specific scheme of NDE. Lastly, this study focused on the youths who happen to be the worst hit by the unemployment crisis. This study is an improvement on other studies on the relationship between NDE skills acquisition schemes and employment generation in Kaduna State.

### 3. Methodology

This work adopted quantitative research design. Data for the analysis was gotten from officials of NDE Kaduna State and the beneficiaries of National Open Apprenticeship Scheme from 2017 to 2022. The study used simple random sampling technique in selecting sample from the population. The sample for the study was 360 derived from a population of 3607 using the Taro Yamane formula. The study used primary source of data using the instrument of questionnaire. Out of the 360 copies of questionnaires distributed, 338 copies were correctly filled and returned and was therefore used for the analysis. The reliability test was done using Cronbach's Alpha output with a benchmark of 70% and the output was .738 indicating that the instrument was reliable. The inferential statistics was analyzed using Linear Regression Analysis in measuring the extent to which the dependent variable (self-employment) can be predicted by the independent variable (NOAS) of the study. The hypothesis was tested using Linear Regression Analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) at 5% level of significance i.e. 0.05.

## 4. Results and Discussions

### 4.1 Results

H<sub>0</sub>: The National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS) has not significantly contributed to self-employment among youths in Kaduna State.

**Table 1: Summary of Regression Results**

Variables	Coefficient	t-statistics	p-value
Constant	3.199	14.204	.000
NOAS	.270	19.062	.000
R-squared	.520		
Adjusted R-squared	.518		
F-statistics	363.370		.000 <sup>b</sup>

*Dependent variable: self-employment*

*Source: SPSS Version 23*

The empirical findings above revealed that the F-statistics had a value of 363.370 with a p-value of .000 and this indicates that the model is fit for the study at 99% level of

confidence. The coefficient of determination R<sup>2</sup> was 0.518 and that indicated that about 52% of the total variation in self-employment can be

explained by the contribution of NOAS of NDE while the remaining 48% can be explained by other indicators/variables not captured in this study.

Given the coefficients, the regression model is represented thus:

The t-statistics of NOAS had a value of 19.062 with a p-value of 0.000. The p-value is lesser than 0.05, which means that the relationship depicted in the model is significant at 95% confidence level. This implies that the study has enough statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

Based on the analysis above, we reject the null hypothesis which states that the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS) has not significantly contributed to self-employment among youths in Kaduna State, and accept the alternate which states that the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS) has significantly contributed to self-employment among youths in Kaduna State.

#### **4.2 Discussion of findings**

The test of the hypothesis revealed that the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS) has significantly contributed (statistically significant at 99%) to self-employment among youths in Kaduna State. This is in line with the findings of Ajayi (2018) whose findings revealed that the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme of the NDE had made significant contribution in reducing the rate of unemployment in Ekiti State and Ajala & Adewole (2016) who reported that the scheme had positive effect on employment generation. National Open Apprenticeship Scheme stands out as one of the key schemes of the NDE and has reportedly had significant impact in the state as many of the beneficiaries are now master-trainers under the scheme. The scheme equally enrolls the highest number of trainees in a year more than the other schemes and has

$$SEM = 3.199 + 0.270NOAS + \varepsilon$$

Where:

SEM = Self-employment among youths in Kaduna State.

NOAS = National Open Apprenticeship Scheme of the NDE.

thus far, contributed to self-employment in Kaduna State.

The study further revealed that the monitoring activities of the NDE has also helped many beneficiaries of the scheme to become self-employed after the training. The Inspectorate department of the NDE is saddled with the responsibility of monitoring the activities and progress of the beneficiaries of the scheme. The monitoring activities carried out by the Inspectorate department has had tremendous impact on the success of the scheme because it helps to point out the difficulties encountered by the beneficiaries in putting their acquired skills into practice in the larger society. This draws the attention of the Directorate to real life obstacles that might hinder youths from becoming self-employed, and therefore work towards proffering solutions. As pointed out by staff of the NDE Kaduna State, some beneficiaries get start-up kits to get their business running immediately, although more funding is needed so that most beneficiaries can get such assistance. The National Open Apprenticeship Scheme alongside other schemes of the Agency also ensure easy and smooth registration of business names for their interested beneficiaries so that they don't encounter such difficulties as they launch into self-employment.

#### **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The National Open Apprenticeship Scheme is one of the numerous schemes of the National Directorate of Employment and it has the ability to generate instant employment for the beneficiaries. From the data generated and analysed for the purpose

of inference, the study concludes that The National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS) has significantly contributed to self-employment among youths in Kaduna State. Self-employment remains a sure means to grow our economy, as opportunities for wage employment keep getting thinner by the day with our rising population. The youths in Kaduna state stand a chance of channelling their energy into many viable businesses if they can get adequate skill acquisition from this agency of the government (NDE).

In order for the NDE to have more impact on self-employment among youths in Kaduna state, efforts should be put in place by the government to enrol more beneficiaries on the platform since it has been proven that the scheme has contributed to self-employment among youths in the state. The duration of the training should also be looked into and should be varied based on the intensity of the training required and individual learning pace and not just have the same start and end date for all beneficiaries. Lastly, efforts should also be put in place by the NDE to raise public awareness about the scheme as this will enlighten government at all levels, non-governmental organizations, religious institutions, as well as free-will donators to support the beneficiaries with start-up capital and resources. This will go a long way in helping the monitoring team ensure that all beneficiaries kick-start their businesses after training.

#### **Suggestions for further studies**

This study has some limitations. It centred on one scheme of the NDE and focused on only the youths. Further studies can consider more schemes of the National Directorate of Employment to find out their strengths and weaknesses in empowering citizens for self-employment in Kaduna State. It is also suggested that similar studies be replicated covering more age brackets beyond the youths.

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