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Assessment of the Impact of Technical Skills Among N-Power Participants: A Socio-Demographic Perspective

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ABSTRACT: The study assessed the impact of technical skills among N-Power Programme participants in Delta State, based on socio-demographic factors. A survey research design was adopted in the study with a population of 13,145 (5,675 males and 7,470 females) from the 25 local government areas in Delta State. The sample size of 370 was determined using the method of Gill et al. (2010). The instrument for the study was a structured questionnaire tested for factor analysis at a range of coefficients of 0.97, 0.95, and 0.93 for the various measurements. The data were thereafter subjected to statistical analysis. Frequency and percentages were used for demographic analysis, while hypotheses were tested using t-test and ANOVA at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings from the result show that there is no significant difference in the technical skills of N-power participants based on sex (p-value>0.05 = 0.075); there is no significant difference in the technical skills of N-power participants based on marital status (p-value>0.05 =0.960); there is significant difference in the technical skills of N-power participants based on educational qualification (p-value<0.05 = 0.042). Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that there should be increased practical training, regular programme evaluation and post-training support such as mentorship and access to credit facilities to enhance skill retention and application. The study established empirical evidence that educational qualification significantly influences the technical skills of N-Power participants, as revealed by post-hoc analyses.

KEY WORDS: Assessment, Technical skills, N-power participants, Socio-demographic perspective

1. INTRODUCTION

A critical aspect of every social investment programme is implementation and its impact. This is why evaluation often forms part of the life cycle of such a programme. There is, therefore, the need to evaluate the extent to which N-power as a social investment programme has been able to achieve its desired goals. As part of the Buhari-Osibanjo's administration social safety net initiative, the N-power programme was introduced in 2015 and launched in 2016. This is a programme, initiated to eradicate youth unemployment in Nigeria (Obadan, 2017). The focus is to provide graduates and non-graduates within ages 18 and 35, with the skills, tools and livelihood to enable them to advance from empowerment to innovation. It was categorized into Graduate Teachers Corps which targeted 500,000 graduates' recruitment, N-power Knowledge targeting 25,000 non-graduates' recruitment and N-power Build which targets 75,000 non-graduates' recruitment. Participants are to provide teaching, instructional, and advisory solutions in four key areas namely agriculture, health, power tech and community education (Obadan, 2017).

N-power Agro participants function as facilitators and communicators, assisting farmers in informed decision-making and ensuring effective application of relevant knowledge to optimize the best outcome on farms. N-power health participants, undergo training as public health assistants. They teach preventive health to community members including pregnant women, children, families and individuals. They are also trained to provide basic diagnostic services (Aderonmu, 2017). N-power Teach participants are trained as teaching assistants in basic and secondary schools in the country. They are to work as support teachers, assisting with teaching, school management and other functions within the schools. They assist in providing basic education to children in marginalised communities (Aderonmu, 2017). This programme works in conjunction with the planned eight innovation hubs across the country to provide incubation and acceleration for the technology and creative industries (Akujuru & Enyioko, 2019).

In addition to the N30,000 stipend paid to each participant each month, N-power volunteers are given devices with relevant content for continuous learning, to facilitate their ability to successfully implement the selected vocation and enable them to take of their lives. According to the progress report (N-SIP, 2018), as of June 2018, 10,000 non-graduates in the N-Build category have been trained in 23 States, and the remaining 10,000 had begun their own training in the skill centres that have been audited and found fit for purpose in the remaining 15 States. The goals of the N-power programme, according to N-SIP (2018), include:

i. to intervene and actively participate in enhancing the livelihoods of unemployed youths;
ii. to design a robust framework for transmitting technical and employability competencies;

iii. to establish a comprehensive framework of solutions addressing underperforming public services and supporting government-led diversification strategies; and
iv. to cultivate and strengthen Nigeria's knowledge economy.

Consequently, the N-power initiatives comprise the following distinct categories:

i. N-power Teach
ii. N-power Health
iii. N-power Agro
iv. N-power Vaids

The N-Power Teach programme engages qualified graduates to support the implementation of education systems in Nigeria. They are deployed as teaching assistants in basic and secondary schools across Nigeria. They are not to replace the current teachers, but are to work as support teachers, assisting with teaching, school management and other functions within the schools. They assist in providing basic education to children in marginalised communities. Similarly, volunteers under the N-Power Health scheme contribute to strengthening and advancing preventive healthcare within their communities, targeting vulnerable populations, including pregnant women, children, alongside families and individuals. Through the N-power Health programme, young graduates who form part of the 500,000 N-power Corps members are trained to work as public health assistants. They teach preventive health to community members, including pregnant women, children, families and individuals. They are also trained to provide basic diagnostic services (Aderonmu,2017).

Volunteers participating in the N-power Agro programme are tasked with delivering advisory services to farmers nationwide by disseminating relevant knowledge and by collecting data on Nigeria's agricultural assets. intermediaries between research and farmers. They function as facilitators and communicators, assisting farmers in informed decision-making and ensuring effective application of relevant knowledge to optimise the best results on farms.

Similarly, the Voluntary Asset and Income Declaration Scheme (VAIDS) aims to motivate taxpayers who are non-compliant or partially compliant to voluntarily disclose their true income and assets and remit the corresponding taxes to the government. The initiative was structured as a one-year programme; participants who perform satisfactorily may be considered for employment by the appropriate tax authorities, while others are reassigned for the N-Power Teach to complete their programme tenure (Nwaobi, 2019; Gbaeprekumo, et al 2024).

Years after the launch of the programme, the goal of establishing the programme seems to be far from being achieved. Several documents, both statistical and empirical, point to the fact that poverty has not only remained formidable, but it has also taken the country hostage. In his assertion, Bisong (2019) noted that poverty and unemployment rate continue to climb vertically, translating into social problems of more monumental and complication proportions, attempting to defy popular government interventions geared towards ameliorating them. Livelihood encompasses the activities and sources of income that enable individuals to meet their basic needs and pursue their aspirations. Employability skills refer to the transferable skills and attributes that individuals need to succeed in a workplace. These can include technical abilities, such as computer literacy and programming knowledge; interpersonal abilities, such as communication and teamwork; problem-solving ability; self-management capability; attitude towards work ethic; flexibility and creativity (Godwin,2019; Nwangwa, Igabari & Osadebe,2022)

Data is, however, scarce on the position of Delta State. Although studies have been carried out on the assessment of the effect of N-power programme in other states of the federation, Delta State remains to be well researched. This is the rationale behind this study, which aims to assess the impact technical skills based on the socio-demographic factors among N-power participants in Delta State. Poverty alleviation remains a major challenge in Delta State. Due to poor enterprise culture, the poverty alleviation programmes in the state have ironically become a driver of poverty and social vices. The programme is designed in such a manner that if well implemented, it can help in further addressing the challenges of unemployment and subsequently, reduce youth poverty, in Delta State.

Concept of N-Power Programme

N-Power is a programme initiated by the Government of Nigeria to help create jobs and reduce poverty through skills transfer, capacity building, enterprise development projects, and public education. The goal of N-Power is to empower youths aged between 18–35 with relevant technical knowledge so they can become self-sufficient in their communities. Nnaeto and Nwambuko, (2023) observed that through this programme, thousands of Nigerians have had access to educational courses that are designed for practical use such as agricultural extension advice or technological instruction. Additionally, these trainings provide graduates with an opportunity to gain employment within the Nigerian economy either in government service or private sector organizations (Abdullahi et al., 2023; Igabari et al 2025). Other components include the provision of periodical funds (for those who receive financing grants) alongside health insurance programs supported by volunteers from state universities who will monitor entrepreneurs' progression offline periodically.

According to Abedi (2020) N-Power programme is a Federal Government initiative designed to provide job opportunities for young Nigerians in the ages of 18 and 35. The programme provides financial assistance, support services and training opportunities to empower unemployed youths in order to contribute to national development efforts. The key purpose of the N-

Power programme are: 1. to reduce graduate unemployment by providing paid employment for 500,000 graduates from different fields; 2. to improve employability by offering technical/vocational education and skills through apprenticeship programmes; 3. to foster innovation through entrepreneurship initiatives which offers access to capital funds, mentorship advice and business plan competitions; 4. to enhance self-reliance amongst rural communities with non-graduate beneficiaries receiving brand new laptops or tablets as part of their benefits package, along with ICT/Media training kits (including internet broadband) that they will use during their 2-year engagement period with the scheme (N-SIP,2018) Furthermore, it also seeks to build private sector capacity in Nigeria through its partnerships programme which links corporate sponsors interested in contributing positively towards Nigerian economic growth potentials via funding guaranteed jobs within certain sectors/industries (Abubakar, et al 2022; Enwerim,2025).

Technical Skills

Technical skills are defined as the ability to use specialized knowledge and tools to perform specific tasks effectively. They include a wide range of capabilities such as programming languages, data analysis, web design, and project management. Adelakun and Oladipo (2021). Technical skills are specialized abilities or knowledge required in a particular field or profession. These skills are typically acquired through formal education, training programmes, or hands-on experiences. Technical skills are essential for individuals to excel in their professional lives, in today's competitive job market, employers often prioritize candidates with specialized technical skills over those without (Subburayan, 2023; Fidelis et al 2024). These skills enable individuals to perform specific tasks or responsibilities efficiently and accurately. Whether it is software development, data analysis, or financial management, technical skills are in high demand across various industries. According to Smith (2018), technical skills play a vital role in enhancing productivity in the workplace. By equipping employees with the necessary technical knowledge, organizations can increase their efficiency and productivity. Employees who possess strong technical skills are more likely to contribute positively to their organizations. They are better equipped to tackle challenges, find innovative solutions, and complete tasks in less time.

Furthermore, technical skills can open up new opportunities for career advancement. According to Brown (2020), employees with specialized technical skills are often sought out for promotions and leadership positions. They possess the necessary skills to effectively lead teams and navigate complex projects. In addition to individual benefits, technical skills also enhance the overall productivity of organizations. Organizations that can harness the power of technical skills are better positioned to adapt to technological advancements and stay competitive in today's digital landscape. Moreover, technical skills enable organizations to leverage new technologies effectively. Organizations that invest in developing their technical skills are better equipped to leverage emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data analytics.

Hypotheses

i. There is no significant difference in the technical skills of N-power participants based on sex;
ii. There is no significant difference in the technical skills of N-power participants based on marital status;
iii. There is no significant difference in the technical skills of N-power participants based on educational qualification

II. METHOD

The study adopted a survey research design. The population of 13,145, comprising 5,675 males and 7,470 females of N-power batch B participants from the twenty-five Local Government Areas of Delta State, and a sample size of 370, was used in the study. Proportionate and snowball sampling techniques were employed in the study. The reason for this choice of sampling technique is that the Local Government Areas in Delta State used in the study did not have an equal number of participants. The choice of this sample size is based on the recommendation of Gill, Johnson and Clark (2010), who in their study on sample size determinants suggested that in a survey where the population size falls within 10,000 and 24,999, the sample size of 370 at $p<0.05$ margin of error, is adequate for the study. The instrument used for data collection in this study was a questionnaire. The instrument was validated using expert judgement in the field of educational measurement and evaluation and the reliability was done using factor.

III. RESULTS

H_{O1}: There is no significant difference in the technical skills of N-power participants based on sex;

Table 1: Summary of T-Test Result Analysis for Hypothesis 1

Independent Samples Test								
Parameters		N	Mean	Std	Df	T	P value	Decision
Technical skills	Male	159	3.20	0.69	357	1.141	0.075	Accepted
	Female	2200	33.10	.0.80				

P<0.05 level of significance

From the results presented in Table 4.3.4. The descriptive statistics indicate that male participants (N = 159) had a mean technical skills score of 3.20 with a standard deviation of 0.69, while female participants (N = 200) had a mean score of 3.10 with a standard

deviation of 0.80. The t-test produced a t-value of 1.141, with a p-value of 0.075, which is greater than 0.05. Since the p-value is above the 0.05 significance level, the difference in technical skills between male and female N-power participants is not statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{O4}) is not rejected, indicating that there is no significant difference in technical skills based on sex. This suggests that both male and female participants in the N-power programme possess similar levels of technical skills, likely due to equal training opportunities and similar programme content provided across genders.

H_{O2}: There is no significant difference in the technical skills of N-power participants based on marital status;

Table 2: Summary of T-Test Result Analysis for Hypothesis 2

ANOVA					
Technical Skills	**Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Between Groups	203	3	.068	.100	.960
Within Groups	240.515	355	.678		
Total	240.718	358			

P<0.05 level of significance

The results in Table 2 show that the between-group sum of squares is 0.203, with 3 degrees of freedom (df), resulting in a mean square of 0.068. The within-group sum of squares is 240.515, with 355 degrees of freedom, giving a total sum of squares of 240.718. The calculated F-value is 0.100, and the corresponding p-value is 0.960. Since the p-value (0.960) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis (H_{O8}) is retained. This means that there is no statistically significant difference in the technical skills of N-power participants based on their marital status. In other words, marital status does not play a role in determining the technical skills of the participants. The findings suggest that factors other than marital status, such as educational background, work experience, or exposure to technical training, may have a more substantial influence on the development of technical skills. This result implies that regardless of whether participants are single, married, divorced, or widowed, they exhibit similar levels of technical competence in the N-power program. It also indicates that the training provided may be uniformly effective across different marital groups, ensuring that all participants acquire technical skills at a comparable level.

H_{O3}: There is no significant difference in the technical skills of N-power participants based on educational qualification

Table 3: Summary of ANOVA Analysis for Hypothesis 3

ANOVA					
Technical Skill	**Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Between Groups	.882	2	1.941	2.803	.042
Within Groups	246.546	356	.693		
Total	250.428	358			

Post Hoc Tests

Multiple Comparisons
Dependent Variable: Technical Skill
Scheffe

(I) Qualification	(J) Qualification	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Ph.D	M.Sc.	-0.38	0.45	0.70	-1.48	0.73
	B.Sc.	0.03	0.42	1.00	-1.00	1.06
M.Sc.	Ph.D	0.38	0.45	0.70	-0.73	1.48
	B.Sc.	0.41	0.17	0.04	-0.02	0.83
B.Sc.	Ph.D	-0.03	0.42	1.00	-1.06	1.00
	M.Sc.	-0.41	0.17	0.04	-0.83	0.02

P<0.05 level of significance

The hypothesis (H_{O12}) posits that there is no significant difference in the technical skills of N-power participants based on their educational qualification. To examine this, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether technical skills significantly vary among participants with different educational qualifications. The ANOVA results indicate that the between-group sum of squares is 3.882, with 2 degrees of freedom (df), leading to a mean square of 1.941. The within-group sum of squares is 246.546, with 356 degrees of freedom, yielding a total sum of squares of 250.428. The computed F-value is 2.803, and

the corresponding p-value is 0.042. Since the p-value (0.042) is less than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis (Ho_{12}) is rejected. This implies that there is a statistically significant difference in the technical skills of N-power participants based on their educational qualifications.

To further explore these differences, a Scheffe post hoc test was conducted. The results indicate a significant difference between participants with an M.Sc. and those with a B.Sc., with a mean difference of 0.41 and a p-value of 0.04. This suggests that N-power participants with a master's degree tend to have significantly higher technical skills than those with a bachelor's degree. However, no significant differences were observed between Ph.D. holders and other groups, as their p-values exceed the 0.05 threshold. This finding suggests that while educational qualifications influence technical skill levels, the difference is primarily observed between those with a master's degree and those with a bachelor's degree. The result may indicate that individuals with a higher level of education have more exposure to specialised technical training. Given this, policymakers and programme administrators may consider tailoring technical skill training to ensure that all participants, regardless of their academic background, receive adequate skill development opportunities to enhance their employability and productivity.

IV. DISCUSSION

Technical skills of N-power participants based on sex

The result of Hypothesis 1 shows that there is no significant difference in the technical skills of N-Power participants based on sex. The ANOVA result for Hypothesis 4 yielded an F-value of 3.185 and a p-value of 0.075, which is greater than the 0.05 significance level. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the technical skills of N-Power participants based on sex. In other words, male and female participants in the program possess technical skills at similar levels, indicating that the N-Power training provides equitable opportunities for skill acquisition for both sexes. This aligns with Akinyemi and Ojo (2022), who found that structured skill acquisition programmes tend to neutralise pre-existing gender disparities in technical competencies, as both men and women receive standardised training under the same conditions. However, some studies argue that sex-based differences in technical skills may still exist in specific industries or contexts. Similarly, Nwachukwu et al. (2020) found that in male-dominated technical fields, such as electrical installation and mechanical repairs, men tend to perform better due to early exposure and societal expectations, whereas women excel in sectors like ICT and fashion technology. The non-significant difference observed in this study could be attributed to the nature of N-Power's training curriculum, which ensures equal access to resources, hands-on practice, and mentorship for both male and female.

The findings suggest that sex alone does not significantly influence the acquisition of technical skills within the N-Power framework. To further enhance skill development, policymakers should focus on bridging any subtle gaps in access to training, motivation, and post-programme job placement. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2021), skill development programmes should integrate sex-responsive training methodologies, mentorship schemes, and targeted incentives to ensure equal participation and long-term employability. Future research could explore whether differences emerge post-training in terms of job retention, income levels, and career progression in technical fields.

Technical skills of N-power participants based on marital status

The result of hypothesis 2 shows that there is no significant difference in the technical skills of N-Power participants based on marital status. The ANOVA result for Hypothesis 8, which examines whether there is a significant difference in the technical skills of N-Power participants based on marital status, yielded an F-value of 0.100 and a p-value of 0.960. Since the p-value is greater than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is retained. This implies that marital status does not significantly influence the technical skills possessed by N-Power participants. Whether single, married, divorced, or widowed, the participants demonstrate similar levels of technical competence, suggesting that technical skill acquisition in the N-Power programme is independent of marital status. This finding aligns with the work of Adebayo and Olanrewaju (2022), who found that marital status had no significant effect on technical skill development among Nigerian youth participating in government-sponsored training programmes. They argued that technical training relies more on structured learning environments and curriculum rather than personal or demographic factors. Similarly, Okonkwo and Adegbite (2021) reported that skill acquisition programmes that emphasise practical learning often produce uniform technical competencies among participants, irrespective of their social or marital circumstances. This supports the idea that hands-on learning and standardised training content are crucial in ensuring equal technical skill development among all beneficiaries.

However, this result contrasts with the findings of Adeyemi and Ojo (2020), who suggested that marital responsibilities can impact the time and commitment individuals allocate to skill acquisition, leading to disparities in technical skill mastery. They found that married individuals often struggle to balance family responsibilities with intensive training, potentially limiting their ability to acquire technical expertise compared to their single counterparts. Despite this opposing perspective, the current study suggests that N-Power's technical training framework provides equal learning opportunities for all participants, regardless of marital status. This highlights the effectiveness of structured vocational training programs in bridging skill gaps among diverse demographic groups.

Technical skills of N-power participants based on educational qualification

The result of hypothesis 3 indicates that there is no significant difference in the technical skills of N-Power participants based on their educational qualification. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) conducted to examine differences in the technical skills of N-power participants based on educational qualification yielded an F-value of 2.803 and a p-value of 0.042. Since the p-value is less than the conventional significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a significant difference in technical skills among participants with different educational qualifications. This implies that the level of formal education attained by N-power participants influences their technical competencies, with some educational groups demonstrating stronger technical skills than others. The post-hoc Scheffe test further clarifies the specific differences among educational groups. The results show that participants with M.Sc. qualifications have significantly higher technical skills compared to those with a B.Sc. (Mean Difference = 0.41, p = 0.04). However, no significant differences were found between Ph.D. holders and M.Sc. participants (Mean Difference = -0.38, p = 0.70) or between Ph.D. holders and B.Sc. participants (Mean Difference = 0.03, p = 1.00). These findings suggest that individuals with a master's degree tend to demonstrate superior technical skills, potentially due to their exposure to more specialised training or professional experiences compared to those with only a bachelor's degree. However, the technical skills of PhD holders do not significantly differ from those of the other two groups, which may imply that at the doctoral level, technical skills become less emphasised in favour of research and theoretical expertise.

These findings align with studies carried out by Adebayo and Adeyemi (2021), who found that individuals with higher levels of education often acquire more advanced technical competencies due to prolonged exposure to academic and professional training. Similarly, Olanrewaju and Yusuf (2020) argued that postgraduate education fosters deeper specialisation, allowing individuals to develop stronger technical proficiency. However, the findings contrast with the work of Okeke and Nwachukwu (2019), who suggested that technical skill acquisition is more influenced by hands-on training and industry exposure than by formal education. The results from this study imply that while formal education plays a role in shaping technical competencies, structured training programmes such as those provided in N-power may be necessary to bridge technical skill gaps across different educational levels. Consequently, to maximise the impact of the N-power programme, technical training should be tailored to accommodate the varying educational backgrounds of participants, ensuring that those with lower formal education receive the necessary support to develop essential technical skills.

V. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that:

i. Significant difference in the technical skills of N-power participants based on sex (p-value>0.05 = 0.075); does not exist.
ii. Significant difference in the technical skills of N-power participants based on marital status (p-value>0.05 =0.960); does not exist.
iii. Significant difference in the technical skills of N-power participants based on educational qualification (p-value<0.05 = 0.042); a significant difference exists.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were made;

i. **Enhanced Practical Training:** The curriculum should incorporate more hands-on and experiential learning approaches to strengthen participants' employability and entrepreneurial competencies, regardless of demographic differences.
ii. **Regular Programme Evaluation:** Periodic assessments of the N-power programme should be conducted to identify gaps in training effectiveness and ensure that skills imparted align with labour market demands.
iii. **Post-Training Support:** To enhance skill retention and application, the government should provide post-training support such as mentorship, networking opportunities, and access to credit facilities for all participants.
iv. **Increased Awareness and Outreach:** Awareness campaigns should be intensified to ensure equal access and participation of all demographic groups, addressing any societal or cultural barriers that may limit programme inclusivity.
v. **Partnership with Private Sector:** Collaboration with private industries and organisations should be strengthened to provide internship opportunities, job placements, and entrepreneurial funding, thereby maximising the impact of acquired skills on economic self-sufficiency.

VII. DISCLOSURE

There is no conflicts of interest in this work.

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