



ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN KOGI STATE, NIGERIA: THE CASE OF N-POWER



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ABSTRACT

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This study aimed at investigating the effects of entrepreneurial skills on youth employment in Kogi State, using N-Power as a case study. Survey research design was adopted. The study adopted snowball sampling technique to select N-Power beneficiaries. A well-designed questionnaire was used as a viable instrument to collect data from beneficiaries in N-Teach, N-Health, N-Tax and N-Agro. Data collected were analysed using Multiple Regression and Ordered Probit Regression Model. Finding shows that entrepreneurial skills development has significant effect on N-Power beneficiaries in Kogi State. Finding further shows that interpersonal relation skill, technology adoption skill, decision-making skill and risk-taking skill have significant and positive relationship with youth self-employment in Kogi State. The study concluded that the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills is a vital approach towards self-employment. The study recommended that the government and policy-makers should device special focus for interpersonal relation skill, decision-making skill, technology adoption skill and risk-taking skill of N-Power beneficiaries; with less attention to financial literacy and creative thinking skills.

Contribution/ Originality: This study contributes to literature by investigating the effects of entrepreneurial skills on youth employment in Kogi State, using N-Power as a case study. The study is the first to focus on N-Power beneficiaries in Kogi State.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a paradigm of massive youth unemployment which has been a central issue of backdrop in her economy. For several years, the issue of unemployment has been a subject of discussion with several attempts by successive government in the country. According to Maigida, Saba, and Namkere (2013) "Nigeria is the most populated black nation in Africa and eight in the world with a population of over 160 million people, she has a nominal Growth Domestic Product of £207.11 billion" (p. 303). Despite this statistics, the youth unemployment still remain worrisome today. Garba (2010) expressed that the Nigeria government is very worried on the increasing

youth unemployment rate and generally, bad economic condition in the country. The situation as observed by [Oshewolo \(2010\)](#) is alarming as more than 45 percent of the Nigeria population lives below poverty line, while 67 percent of the poor are extremely poor. [Maigida et al. \(2013\)](#) insist that “the reality on ground which helps to give a better explanation to poverty in Nigeria is that which is seen every day on the streets of both urban and rural areas”. To reverse this ugly trend, the Federal Government introduced N-Power as one of the Social Investment Programme (SIP) in 2016.

Though, the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1986 introduced the small scale industry and youth employment scheme under the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) ([Ezeanokwasa & Nwachukwu, 2014](#)) and subsequently YouWIN and others. NDE provides micro-credit to beneficiaries to start project of their choice as well as becoming self-employed ([Ezeanokwasa & Nwachukwu, 2014](#)). The rationale for the incorporation of MSME clinic to N-Power programme is to encourage more spring up of small ventures. Studies ([Mahmood & Hanafi, 2013](#); [Subramaniam, 2010](#)) have empirically revealed that SMEs contribute positively to local and global economy. The roles of SMEs in the creation of employment opportunity are the underpinning fact in N-Power programme. N-power programme is designed to provide entrepreneurial skills and enable savings that can translate into future creation of small business venture. For example, beneficiaries of N-Agro arm of the N-power are not only given experience, but trained and paid stipends to enable them accumulate future start-up capital. The aim of the programme is to ‘impact skills, attitudes, aspirations and competencies mostly in the youths, and provide fund to enable them practice entrepreneurship or create self-employment as well as help generate employment for others’ ([Abdullah, Osman, & Rahim, 2009](#); [Samian & Buntat, 2012](#)).

Strategically, it is expected that N-Power programme motivate increasing entrepreneurial activities which have considerable link with the overall economic growth of Kogi State in terms of job creation. People become gainfully employed through the training and entrepreneurial skill acquisition ([Ebong & Asodike, 2011](#); [Ikegwu Emmanuel, Ajiboye, Aromolaran, Ayodeji, & Okorafor, 2014](#); [Nwanaka & Amaehule, 2011](#)). [Acheampong \(2006\)](#) added that human capital theory supports the fact that entrepreneurial training and skill acquisition will enhance self-employment. This position calls for research attention in Kogi State. It is in this regard that this study related the subject matter to Kogi State.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Recently, a number of Social Investment Programmes were launched in Nigeria; one of which N-Power is highly trending. Studies (such as [Obadan \(2001\)](#); [Ayodeji, Salau, and Adeniyi \(2014\)](#)) have argued that programmes such as the NDE, FEAP, Better Life Programme, NAPEP and NEEDS were implemented with vulnerability to challenges. One of the reasons behind the implementation of the N-Power programme is to pursue the Economic Recovery Growth of Nigeria. Though, the N-power is targeted at providing employment to the youth at all cost, and equally enhancing entrepreneurial skills development programme in Nigeria. N-Power may fail in Kogi State and Nigeria at the long run. [Okoro and Bassey \(2018\)](#) expressed that ‘youth without adequate teachers training’ instead of acquiring necessary skills, are now heading subjects. The programmes are built on invalid assumptions, weak policy and untrusted foundation. For instance, N-power agro beneficiaries are expected to serve as intermediaries between researchers and farmers. It is believed that this will aid the adoption of effective farming technology and best practices. This is likely to be fallacy in that several factors were not considered in the N-Power policy formulation. Youth unemployment is likely to increase at a geometric rate because the targeted entrepreneurial skills development may not be fully achieved. The problems associated with this is that:

- i. Some beneficiaries are primarily motivated by the zeal to cushion poverty.
- ii. Some beneficiaries are greedy.
- iii. Some beneficiaries (though went through higher institution) lacks considerable level of mental ability to cope with the programme.
- iv. Some beneficiaries lack passion for the programmes.
- v. Those who have passion and are ready to undergo entrepreneurial skill development were not selected.

The aforementioned factors among others are likely to crumble the objective of youth skill acquisition, employment and the ERG at large. Yakubu and Aderonmu (2010) expressed that programmes aimed at addressing youth employment and poverty in the past failed to achieve its goals. This failure is in no doubt unprecedented by unleveraged or neglected factors. In fact, Obadan (2001) identified few of these factors as inadequate funding, project duplication, gross inefficiency, poor coordination of programmes, corruption, lack of transparency and accountability.

Considering the factors that can limit the objectives of N-Power programmes, entrepreneurial skills acquisition process is likely to be marred, and the employment creation and reduce poverty target may fail. It is observed that a strategic structure/plan is missing to keep a strong focus on the path to achieving the N-Power objectives. Enu-Kwesi (2012) argued that structural theorists' proposition for entrepreneurial training under a good design will establish focus on the youth. With a well-defined structure of entrepreneurial training, Benjamin-Schonberger (2010) argued that the youth have the greatest potential to bridge gaps between venture creation and poverty. It is believed that the entrepreneurial skills development programmes will create idealistic tendency and action-oriented mind-sets in the youth. It is observed that studies in this regards have not been conducted to investigate the relationship between entrepreneurial skills and youth employment in Kogi State using N-Power programmes as a case study. This study explored the gap.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. Investigate the effect of entrepreneurial skills development on self-employment of youth in Kogi State.
- ii. Investigate the factors affecting the entrepreneurial skills development in Kogi State N-Power programmes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Conceptual Framework

Studies (such as Ibru (2009); Amadi (2012)) have made it known that 'entrepreneurial skill acquisition' is a process which involves people acquiring or learning one or more collection of skills or a particular entrepreneurial behavior that can transform into venture and employment creation. Bolarinwa and Okolocha (2016) in their opinion also expressed that entrepreneurial skills are a wide range of competencies that are seen as entrepreneurial and useful to youth entrepreneurs such as; knowledge, skills and personal traits. Entrepreneurial activities are substantially different depending on the type of organizational activities involved. Researches have indicated that certain skills seem to be associated with entrepreneurs. Laura (2005) and Marsan (2009) identified some essential skills needed to build a great business and become a successful entrepreneur. These skills are divided into personal characteristics, interpersonal, creative thinking, practical, technology, decision-making and financial literacy skills. Entrepreneurial skills acquisition programmes are therefore a well-packaged learning process which is designed to provide participants with one or more collection of skills (interpersonal, creative thinking, risk-taking, technology adoption, decision-making and financial literacy skills) or necessary entrepreneurial behaviour needed to start a new venture or nurture an existing one. Idoko (2014) viewed the development of creativity skill as an empowerment to the youth. This significance of entrepreneur's decision-making skill for self-employment is also emphasized. Faloye and Olatunji (2018) noted that risk-taking, high level of creativity and innovation are crucial for entrepreneurial success. Also, there is need to obtain technology adoption skill. According to Hisrich and Peters (2002) 'technical skills and business management skills' are so much important in entrepreneurial engagement. The cleavage created between 'technical skills and business management skills' appears confusing. Technical skill is an aspect of management skill, and the dichotomy between them may be unnecessary.

Entrepreneurship is about identifying and converting opportunities. Ikeme and Onu (2007) supported that it is about seeking investment opportunities and establish a profit-oriented enterprise. Samian and Buntat (2012) expressed that the essence is to identify and exploit entrepreneurial opportunity for self-employment. It is thus important that entrepreneurial skills be acquired to enhance the easy identification and conversion of opportunities in the business environment of Kogi State. The skills acquired are likely to facilitate distinctive way of handling

entrepreneurial issue, instil self-confidence, increase self-esteem and self-employment (Cheston & Kuhn, 2002; Rufai, Abdulkadir, & Abdul, 2013). Emaikwu (2011) argued that entrepreneurial skill training has the tendency of influencing entrepreneurship. A number of studies (Amadi, 2012; Ibru, 2009; Ikegwu Emmanuel et al., 2014; Salman, 2009) have found self-employment to be positively influenced by entrepreneurial skill training. The most important thing in developing entrepreneurship towards economic goal is skill acquisition training programme (which N-Power is designed to achieve). The ability to exploit entrepreneurial opportunity predicated on the skills/knowledge which can be acquired through N-Power training programmes. N-Power is compulsorily designed to create jobs for the Nigerian youth. Federal Ministry of Youth Development according to Bureau of Public Service Reforms (2017) is “established to provide a sustainable framework for integrated planning and collaboration among stakeholders for the development of policies and programmes, laws and other initiatives that promote and enhance the development of the Nigerian youth and the protection of their interests” (p.11). Philip, Samson, and Ogwu (2013) identified other youth employment/empower programmes as National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agencies (SMEDAN), Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) and Youth Enterprise With Innovation in Nigeria (YOUWIN), National Agency for Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). Regardless of the programmes, youth unemployment/empowerment remains a major challenge to the developmental process of the Nigeria economy (Salami, 2013). Youth empowerment is an attitudinal, structure and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability, authority and agency to make decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people including youths and adults (Ezeani, 2012). Undiyaunde and Otu (2015) stated that:

“Youth empowerment focuses on creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which young people can act on their own behalf, on their own terms, rather than at the direction of others. These enabling conditions includes economics and social base, political will, adequate resource allocation and supportive legal and administrative frameworks, a stable environment of equality, peace and democracy and access to knowledge, information and skills and a positive value system” (p.359).

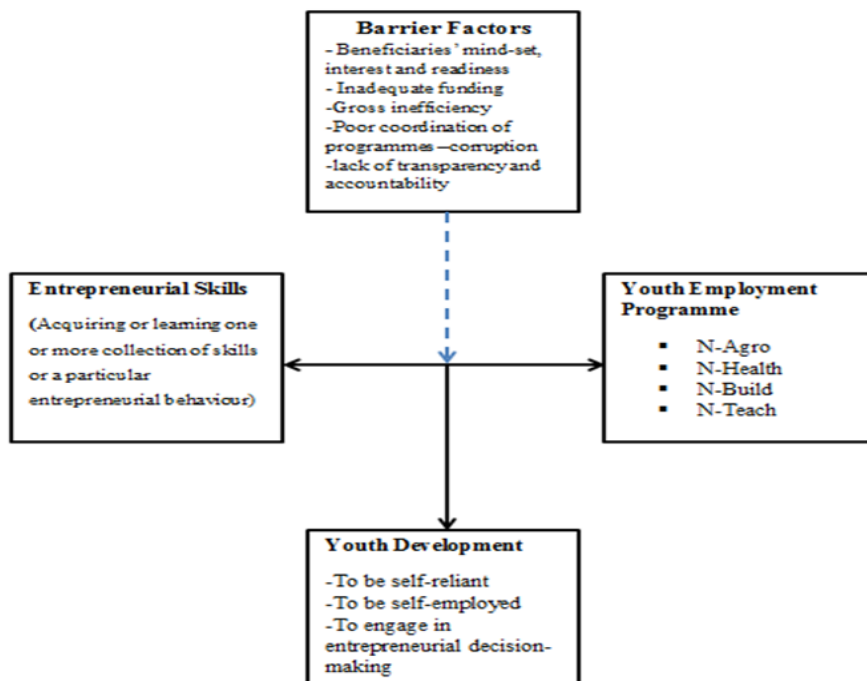


Figure-1. Relationship between entrepreneurial skills and youth employment programme.

Source: Dasmani (2011); Rufai et al. (2013); Idoko (2014).

N-Power training programmes are seen as a vital tool for promoting human development. It is a vital source of developing human capital (Ikegwu Emmanuel et al., 2014). As earlier noted, the programmes are seen as response or intervention by the government to reduce youth or graduates' unemployment rate. Although, studies (Dasmani, 2011; Rufai et al., 2013) had alarmed that "entrepreneurship graduates could not get employment because they possessed low skills and low self-confidence required by industries". Premising on their position, it is believed that entrepreneurial skills development programmes have the probability of motivating more entrepreneurial ventures in Kogi State. Studies (Ebong & Asodike, 2011; Ekpe & Mat, 2012; Ibru, 2009; Ikegwu Emmanuel et al., 2014) have found that skill acquisition training has positive effect on entrepreneurial activity in Nigeria. Similar study was conducted by Brana (2008) which found that entrepreneurial skill acquisition has positive effect on entrepreneurial activity in France. The Figure 1 indicates that the entrepreneurial skill acquired through N-Power employment can facilitate youth to engage in entrepreneurial decision-making which may consequently have effect on entrepreneurial activity. The simple implication of this in relation to Kogi State is that entrepreneurial skills programmes through N-Power will lead to youth self-reliance, self-employment and decision to venture in entrepreneurial activity.

Figure 1 with a broken arrow shows that the relationship between youth employment and entrepreneurial skills acquisition programmes is likely to be affected by factors such as poor funding, corruption, entrepreneurial spirit, lack of transparency, beneficiaries' mind-set, interest and readiness. The fact is that other factors may have strong hold on the potential of the N-Power programmes. Akpoveta and Agbomah (2009) are of the opinion that increasing incidence of youth unemployment is connected with lack of entrepreneurial training/skills. In Kogi State for example, more preference is given to educational certificate. This however is the first backdrop in N-Power programmes in the state. Today, graduates with low level of intelligence or resourcefulness make up the labour market of Kogi State. Okoli and Okoli (2013) added that majority of graduates of higher institutions in Nigeria lack the expected technical communication and human relations as well as entrepreneurial skills required for self-efficacy and self-employment.

The concept 'self-efficacy' though remains unpronounced in the N-Power programme, but it is a 'key construct' based on the entrepreneurial skills and empowerment initiatives. The N-Power programmes are expected to influence a knowledge structure that can influence or motivate vital entrepreneurial decisions to start-up ventures at the later date. A model of self-efficacy (Gist, 1992) suggests that 'efficacy perceptions themselves are influenced by objective knowledge, motivation, and task characteristics'. It is believed that the entrepreneurship environment is challenging, and the success of an entrepreneur in such environment depends on the knowledge and skills on how to undertake risk and manage uncertainty. Such environments are 'characteristic of entrepreneurship' (Unger & Homburg, 2006).

2.2. Theoretical Framework

The Human Capital Theory supports the position of this study. The theory is traced to the 'macroeconomic development theory'. In 1950s, emphasis was on 'land, labour, capital and management' as the principal factors of production (Becker, 1993; Mincer, 1962). The position of labour as inevitable resource necessary to juxtapose other resources was not clearly expressed. The theory assumes that experience is a vital component of knowledge and skills. This implies that human becomes resourceful through the acquisition of knowledge and skills. This actually the rationale of the N-Power programme in Nigeria; as beneficiaries are meant to possess experience from their engagement. The ground upon which Human Capital theory initially stood is that 'people's learning capacities are of comparable value with other resources involved in the production of goods and services'.

There is no doubt that a number of studies have utilized Human Capital Theory to explain phenomenal entrepreneurial behaviours or intentions. Researchers (Chandler & Hanks, 1998; Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Jens, Rauch, Frese, & Rosenbusch, 2011) have also utilized the human capital theory to predict entrepreneurial success. Researchers have "employed a large spectrum of variables to signify human capital such as training, employment experience, start-up experience, skills, knowledge and others" (Jens et al., 2011). Almost similar to the suggestion of Becker (1993), N-Power programmes as an arm of the Social Investment Programmes is designed to load

participants with entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to analyse problems and proffer solution, nurture and grow an healthy venture after the expiration of two years. By then, participants are expected to have acquired reasonable level of entrepreneurial skills through training and experience accumulated in the course of the two years. Acquisition is the transformation from experience to knowledge and skills (Jens et al., 2011).

3. METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives of this study, a quantitative research approach was used. Thus, survey research design was adopted. Based on the problem of accessibility of N-Power beneficiaries, 'snowball sampling technique' was also adopted. This enables referral from few selected N-Power beneficiaries. The researchers curtailed the bias that may result from the use of the 'snowball sampling technique' through unstructured interviews. A well-designed questionnaire was used as a viable instrument to collect data from beneficiaries in N-Teach, N-Health, N-Tax and N-Agro (which are arms of the N-Power programme). The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient. The reliability results of all the constructs in the instrument are adequate enough. As shown in Table 1, the results show that the instrument is reliable.

Table-1. Showing the reliability of constructs.

Constructs	Items	Coefficient (β)	Constructs	Items	Coefficient(β)
Interpersonal relation skill	3	.81	Poor Funding	2	.70
Creative thinking skill	3	.72	Corruption	2	.72
Risk-taking skill	3	.74	Beneficiaries' Mind-Set	2	.70
Technology adoption skill	3	.73	Interest And Readiness	2	.78
Decision-making skill	3	.78	Entrepreneurial Spirit	2	.80
Financial literacy skill	3	.85	Self-employment	3	.76

Source: Field survey, 2018.

Matemane (2018) added that "the instrument is considered reliable based on the fact that the coefficients are above the acknowledged threshold of 0.70". Entrepreneurial skills were dimensioned into interpersonal relation skill, creative thinking skill, risk-taking skill, technology adoption skill, decision-making skill and financial literacy skill. Youth employment was measured with self-employment.

However, 300 questionnaires (100%) were administered, 210 questionnaires (70%) were returned and 90 questionnaires (30%) were not returned. Thus, analysis was based on returned questionnaires. Analysis was done using Multiple Regression Model and Ordered Probit Regression Model.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 shows the age bracket of respondents. It is observed that 39 respondents (18.6%) were 15 to 20 years; 63 respondents (30.0%) were 21 to 25 years; 47 respondents (22.4%) were 26 to 30 years; 40 respondents (19.0%) were 31 to 35 years; and 21 respondents (10.0%) were 36 years and above. The implication of this is that majority of the respondents in the study area were 21 to 25 years.

The Table 2 shows the sex of respondents in the study area. It is posited that 125 respondents (59.5%) were male; and 85 respondents (40.5%) were female. It is observed that majority of respondents in the study area were male.

The Table 2 shows marital status of respondents. It is postulated that 46 respondents (21.9%) were single; 72 respondents (34.3%) were married; 61 respondents (29.0%) were divorce; and 31 respondents (14.8%) were widow(er). It is observed that majority of respondents in the study area were married.

Table-2. Demographic characteristics of respondents.

Demographic factors	Frequency	Percent
Age range		
15 to 20 years	39	18.6
21 to 25 years	63	30.0
26 to 30 years	47	22.4
31 to 35 years	40	19.0
36 years and above	21	10.0
Total	210	100.0
Sex		
Male	125	59.5
Female	85	40.5
Total	210	100.0
Marital status		
Single	46	21.9
Married	72	34.3
Divorce	61	29.0
widow(er)	31	14.8
Total	210	100.0
Educational qualification		
PSLC	39	18.6
SSCE	66	31.4
OND/NCE	56	26.7
HND/B.Sc	32	15.2
M.Sc and above	17	8.1
Total	210	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2018.

Table 2 shows educational qualification of respondents. It is observed that 39 respondents (18.6%) were Primary School Leaving Certificate Holder; 66 respondents (31.4%) were Secondary School Certificate Holder; 56 respondents (26.7%) were Diploma Certificate Holder or its equivalents; 32 respondents (15.2%) were Bachelor of Science Holder or its equivalents; and 17 respondents (8.1%) were Master of Science Holders and above. The implication of this is that majority of respondents in the study area were Secondary School Certificate Holder.

Table-3. Descriptive statistics of acquired skills by beneficiaries

Variables	N	Mean	Std. deviation
Interpersonal relation skill	210	1.3476	.47735
Creative thinking skill	210	1.3238	.46905
Risk-taking skill	210	1.3762	.48559
Technology adoption skill	210	1.3286	.47082
Decision-making skill	210	1.3952	.49007
Financial literacy skill	210	1.3143	.46534
Information processing skill	210	1.4619	.80954

Source: Field survey, 2018.

Table 3 shows that respondents have a collection of skills (interpersonal, creative thinking, risk-taking, technology adoption, decision-making, financial and information processing skills)

which can facilitate distinctive way of handling entrepreneurial issue and achieving success. Respondents possessed interpersonal skill (mean= 1.3476; SD= .47735), creative thinking (mean= 1.3238; SD= .46905), risk-taking skill (mean= 1.3762; SD= .48559), technology adoption skill (mean= 1.3286; SD= .47082), decision-making skill (mean= 1.3952; SD= .49007), financial skill (mean= 1.3143; SD= .46534) and information processing skill (mean= 1.4619; SD= .80954). The result shows that the mean score of 'information processing skill' is the highest with higher standard deviation. The higher standard deviation depicts more of data spread out on the mean. Other skills however appear with strong mean scores. The results show that the respondents strongly possess the aforementioned skills. The implication of this is that respondents have relevant skills to jumpstart entrepreneurial process/activities and succeed it. These are relevant entrepreneurial skills that may indirectly result to economic progress if they are adequately utilized.

Table-4. Multiple regression analysis.

Variables	Beta (β)	Std. error	T-test	P-value	R ²
IPS	.354	.078	20.514	.000	.553**
CTS	.056	.067	.710	.401	
FLS	-.118	.086	1.920	.167	
TAS	.220	.083	6.994	.001	
DMS	.216	.062	11.919	.000	
RTS	.286	.099	8.269	.000	

Source: Field survey, 2018 ** Significant at 0.01.

The R² in Table 4 shows that 55.3% of the variation in the self-employment of youth is explained by the collection of entrepreneurial skills developed or possessed by the N-Power beneficiaries in Kogi State. The remaining 44.7% unexplained variation depicts that other relevant skills are practically important to enhance the self-employment of youth (N-Power beneficiaries) in Kogi State. The R² value is above average and it is significant (at the p-value= 0.01). The implication of this is that entrepreneurial skills development has significant effect on the self-employment of youth (N-Power beneficiaries) in Kogi State. This conforms to the assertion of Ekpe and Mat (2012) that skill acquisition is a vital tool for self-employment.

Table-5. Factors affecting the entrepreneurial skills of youth in N-Power programme.

Factors	Coefficients	Standard error	P> z
Poor funding	.063	.077	.510
Corruption	-.072	.074	.390
Beneficiaries' Mind-Set	.313	.081	.001*
Interest and readiness	-.167	.080	.014*
Entrepreneurial spirit	.248	.067	.001*
Number of Obs		210	
PR χ^2		29.531	
Prob > χ^2		.000	
R ² (Probit)		.408	

Source: Field survey, 2018.

NB: z-values* indicates significant at 0.01.

Table 4 also shows financial literacy skill (β = -.118; p-value > 0.05) has insignificantly negative relationship with self-employment of youth (N-Power beneficiaries) in Kogi State. In addition, creative thinking skill (β = .056; p-value > 0.05) has insignificantly positive relationship with self-employment of youth in Kogi State. Interpersonal relation skill (β = .354; p-value = 0.01), technology adoption skill (β = .220; p-value = 0.01), decision-making skill (β = .216; p-value = 0.01) and risk-taking skill (β = .286; p-value = 0.01) have significant and positive relationship with self-employment of youth in Kogi State. This aligns with the finding of Faloye and Olatunji (2018) that

a significantly positive relationship exists between 'self-employment and risk taking propensity'. Also, this study supports the finding of Enu-Kwesi (2012) that risk-taking stimulates business growth. The implication is that increase in interpersonal relation skill, technology adoption skill, decision-making skill and risk-taking skill will lead to proportional increase in self-employed youth in Kogi State.

The Table 5 reveals the results of factors affecting the entrepreneurial skills of youth in N-Power Programme in Kogi State. The factors are poor funding, corruption, beneficiaries' mind-set, entrepreneurial spirit and interest and readiness.

Based on the results, the PR χ^2 is 29.531. The 'Pearson goodness-of-fit chi-square' indicates that the model sufficiently fits the data. This assertion is proven significant based on the p-value of 0.01. Factually, the model sufficiently fit the data well. In that case, there is no violation of assumptions in the model. Also, Prob > χ^2 = 0.000 connotes that 100% of the changes in the entrepreneurial skills of youth in N-Power Programme in Kogi State were explained by the variables indicated the model. The R^2 (Probit) of 0.408 reveals that 40.8% of the entrepreneurial skills of youth in N-Power Programme in Kogi State is explained by the significant factors (beneficiaries' mind-set, entrepreneurial spirit and interest and readiness). The implication is that beneficiaries' mind-set, entrepreneurial spirit and interest and readiness affect the entrepreneurial skills of youth in N-Power Programme in Kogi State significantly among other factors.

It is observed that 'interest and readiness of youth' entered the model with a negative sign, which implies that the youth in N-Power Programme in Kogi State accumulate more skills with lesser interest and readiness (entrepreneurial intention). This reflects the fact that the youth in N-Power Programme in Kogi State are more obsessed with the monthly stipends (N30,000) rather than nurturing interest and readiness to take-up entrepreneurial endeavour after the elapse of the N-Power Programme.

Interestingly, poor funding and corruption appear to be non-significant factors affecting the entrepreneurial skills of youth in N-Power Programme in Kogi State. This implies that there is a good perception about government investment in the N-Power Programme. Also by implication, corruption in the N-Power Programme is put at the barest minimum. N-Power Programme is likely to yield favourable economic result at the long-run sincere corruption (which is famously known as cankerworm) is prevented.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The acquisition of entrepreneurial skills is a vital approach towards self-employment. It is quite important to note that a collection of skills (such as interpersonal, risk-taking, technology adoption, decision-making and information processing skills among others) are instrumental to resolving entrepreneurial issue and achieving success among young people in Kogi State. The findings of this study proved that the collection of entrepreneurial skills (as developed or possessed by the N-Power beneficiaries) is paramount to enhancing the self-employment of youth in Kogi State. Creative thinking and financial literacy skills have no significant influence on their self-employment.

However, there is no doubt that there are numerous factors affecting the entrepreneurial skills of youth in N-Power Programme in Kogi State. It is certain that the changes in the entrepreneurial skills of youth in N-Power Programme in Kogi State were caused by these factors. Among other factors, beneficiaries' mind-set, entrepreneurial spirit and interest and readiness affect the entrepreneurial skills of youth in N-Power Programme in Kogi State significantly; but 'interest and readiness of youth' affects it negatively. It is possible that majority of the youth in N-Power Programme in Kogi State are preoccupied with the token (N30,000 monthly stipend) attached to the programme. Meanwhile, funding and corruption are not significant enough to affect the entrepreneurial skills of youth in N-Power Programme in Kogi State. Government investment and fight against corruption in the N-Power Programme may be applaud-able.

Sequel to the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made that:

- i. The government and policy-makers should device special focus for interpersonal relation skill, decision-making skill, technology adoption skill and risk-taking skill of N-Power beneficiaries; with less attention to financial literacy and creative thinking skills. These will have multiplier effects on self-employment of youth in Kogi State.

- ii. The N-Power Programme coordinator should organize seminars or workshop section where issues relating to beneficiaries' mind-set, entrepreneurial spirit and interest and readiness of beneficiaries will be deeply and positively influenced in order to enhance effective acquisition of entrepreneurial skills of youth.

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