

A Psychometric Assessment of the OSUN Youth Empowerment Scheme (OYES) Of the OSUN State Government of Nigeria

Folaranmi Olufisayo Akinosun (0000-0002-8131-6503)

folaranmiakinosun@gmail.com, +2348033705261

Department of Public Administration, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria

Abstract

The paper assesses the Osun Youth Empowerment Scheme (OYES) of the Osun State Government of Nigeria as a poverty alleviation programme, from the beneficiaries' point of view. Data were collected on a psychometric scale with the aid of a questionnaire. Using a combination of snowball and convenience sampling techniques, 1,350 OYES cadets were sampled. Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics. It was found that the scheme was targeted at the youth who were not discriminated against on any basis. Adjudged sustainable, the scheme's overall success was partly attributed to its multipartite nature. However, it was found that the scheme neither had an adequate administrative structure nor adequate funding with the state government as the sole funder. Moreover, stipends were not commensurate with beneficiaries' academic qualifications, and it was perceived that political affiliation unduly influenced qualification and access to certain benefits, rights and privileges. The downsides notwithstanding, the scheme was adjudged worthy of adoption by other states and at the federal level for poverty alleviation if improved. Consequently, the paper recommends a total overhauling of the scheme, better funding, upward review of the remunerations, and a check on undue political interference. In addition, the absorption into the mainstream civil service of deserving and qualified cadets was recommended. Moreover, the efficacy of skills acquisition towards self-reliance should be emphasized and ensured. Where required, outstanding trainees should be provided with sufficient credit facilities to set them up consequent upon a successful training.

Keywords: *OYES; poverty alleviation; empowerment; skills acquisition; N-Power*

Date of Submission: 01-05-2022

Date of Acceptance: 13-05-2022

I. Introduction

One of the most common perennial problems afflicting the world today and which governments at all levels are fighting hard is poverty (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2009). It is indisputably one of the most daunting nuisances dogging regional and national development across the globe. Little wonder then that it remains one of the most topical issues in the developmental agenda of most of the world's countries. Even international organisations are involved in the war against poverty. For instance, the issue of poverty and how to tackle it at the global level is the first among the eight goals aimed to be achieved by the world leaders at the United Nations (UN) Millennium Summit of September, 2000 which gave birth to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by 189 countries of the world. It also takes a central place in the Sustainable Development Goals, a global development framework that succeeded the MDGs on its expiration in 2015 and which is intended to be achieved by 2030 (UNDP & UNICEF, 2002; UN, 2015).

Granted that poverty has no geographical boundaries, it is evidently more pronounced in the developing world where it is a household name. Available records show that in 1990, about 1.25 billion people in the developing world lived below the international poverty line. Also, as of 2004, people that lived below one dollar (the then international poverty line) per day were up to 41.1% of the entire population in the Sub-Saharan Africa. The region has the highest proportion of people living in poverty with nearly half of the population living below the international poverty line of one dollar per capita per day (UNDP, 2008).

In Nigeria, poverty rate has consistently skyrocketed over the years, defying every measure taken to combat it. For instance, the incidence of poverty in the country rose from 28.1% in 1980 to 46.3% in 1985, 66% in 1996, about 70% in 2000, and about 69% in 2010 (NBS, 2010). Poverty has proven so intractable in Nigeria that the United Nation's Human Development Reports (UNHDR) of 2006 rated Nigeria's poverty rate between 1990 and 2005 as being up to 70.8% of the populace. This trend is far above the Sub-Saharan African average of 41.1% in 2004. Also, as of 2000, Nigeria was the 23rd poorest of the 85 developing countries in terms of human

poverty. In 2005, the country ranked 75th of 103 developing countries and 114th of 134 in 2009. In addition, Nigeria ranked as the 8th failed state in Africa in 2010, and the 14th in the whole world (UNDP, 2006).

Moreover, Nigeria was rated in 1993 as 137th of 174 countries in terms of Human Development (HD). In 1997 and 1998, she was rated 28th and 23rd respectively among 174 countries of the world (UNDP, 1999). This trend continued and the country was rated between 158th and 159th of 177 countries in terms of HD from 2005 through 2009, and she also became the 18th poorest country of the 177 countries in the world. Then, in 2005, the World Bank ranked Nigeria as the second poorest nation on earth (UNDP, 2006, 2008, 2009 & 2010).

The foregoing staggering statistics are pointers that poverty is rife in Nigeria. A combination of several complex factors contribute to poverty in the country. They include low or negative economic growth, inappropriate macroeconomic policies, deficiencies in the labour market resulting in limited job growth, low productivity and low wages in the informal sector and a lag in human resource development (Ajakaiye & Adeyeye, 1999). It is also an outcome of inefficient use of common resources. This may result from weak policy environment, inadequate infrastructure, weak access to technology, and weak credit facilities, among other factors. It can also be due to certain groups using certain mechanisms in the system to exclude 'problem groups' from participating in economic development, including the democratic process (Adebayo, 2006).

Another important cause of poverty in Nigeria is the lack of employable skills, no thanks to the operative educational system in the country which places undue emphasis on liberal education rather than on acquisition of skills, which should prepare the individual for better employment opportunities. In other words, the country's educational system focuses on and produces graduates who lack requisite relevant vocational skills that could enable them to be self-reliant. Worsening the situation is the proliferation of tertiary institutions in the country without commensurate provision of employment opportunities. The collateral problem is a plethora of school leavers who are armed with proficiency certificates that cannot help them out of the vicious cycle of poverty.

Many Nigerian youths roam the streets without any gainful employment. This development has far-reaching implications on the social wellbeing and security of the country. It is dangerous to ignore this veritable threat as it portends grave risks to national security, peace and harmony, and development. No nation can afford to ignore the burden of youth unemployment. For instance, many unemployed youths readily resort to crime for survival. Vandalism, cybercrime, techno-crime, armed robbery, prostitution, drug trafficking, insurgency, kidnapping, banditry and political thuggery easily become ways out of their predicament. This situation must be arrested.

With a view to arresting the dangerous trends in the incidence of poverty in the country, various governments across the three tiers of government over the years have been taking drastic steps. There are a myriad of policies, schemes and programmes embarked upon by the governments aimed at eradicating poverty. Some of these were later redubbed poverty alleviation programmes on the realisation that poverty could not really be totally eradicated. These programmes, schemes or agencies include, at the federal level, Better Life Programme for Rural Women, Family Support Programme (FSP), Family Economic Empowerment and Advancement Programme (FEAP), Directorates of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) with the State Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (SEEDS) at the state level, and the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP).

State governments are not left out in the war against poverty and unemployment in Nigeria. They have also flagged many programmes aimed at fighting poverty to a standstill. Of a specific mention is the Osun Youth Empowerment Scheme (OYES), a brainchild of the executive governor of Osun State, Ogbeni Rauf Adesoji Aregbesola, initiated on the 17th of December 2010. This study attempted an evaluation of this poverty alleviation scheme vis-à-vis the success it has achieved so far. This was with a view to providing information as regards the efficacy or otherwise of the scheme in fighting poverty in the state.

II. Literature Review And Theoretical Framework

2.1 An Overview of Poverty Alleviation Efforts in Nigeria

Over 70 per cent of the Nigerian population is classified as poor, with 35 per cent living in absolute poverty (Global Action on Ageing, 2009). Poverty is especially severe in rural areas, where the majority of the people are resident and deriving livelihood from agriculture (NBS, 2006), and where social services and infrastructure are limited or non-existent (Global Action on Ageing, 2009). However, this does not suggest that urban poverty in the country is in any way less severe. Poverty is a national plague in the country; hence, government at various levels, through numerous programmes, have always been seeking ways of eradicating or at least alleviating it among the teeming population.

Three distinct periods of poverty alleviation can be identified in Nigeria, especially with reference to the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of the military government of the Ibrahim Babangida's administration: the Pre-SAP Era, the SAP Era, and the Post-SAP Era, which Kolawole (2021) described as the

Democratic Era. According to Kolawole (2021), during the Pre-SAP Era, poverty reduction was not the nation's primary focus of development planning. Rather, poverty reduction only popped up as a by-product of the government's development agenda. It was a period after the country had prepared and executed the First, Second, Third and Fourth National Development Plans between 1962-1968, 1970-1974, 1975-1980 and 1981-1985 respectively. Other efforts that alleviated poverty in Nigeria during the Pre-SAP period included the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFP), the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), and the Green Revolution Programme (GRP). These programmes were directly targeted at alleviating poverty by improving the food situation in the country in the wake of its civil war. Other programmes were also initiated during this period. They included the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS), the Rural Electrification Scheme (RES), the Rural Banking Programme (RBP), and the Low-Cost Housing Scheme. The main objective of these support programmes was to generate employment, enhance agricultural output and income, and stem the prevalent rural-urban drift tide. Objectively assessed, these programmes impacted positively on many Nigerians. However, they were not sustained (Ogumike, 1998; Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), 1999; Akinyosoye, 2005; Nnabuike, 2014).

The SAP Era saw conscious policy efforts made by the national government targeted at poverty alleviation. However, the implementation of SAP further exacerbated the problem as the living conditions of many Nigerians deteriorated significantly. This realisation led to the conception and implementation of many poverty alleviation programmes between 1986 and 1998. Programmes during this era included the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the Better Life for Rural Women Programme, the Family Support Programme (FSP), the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), the Agricultural Development Programmes (ADP), the Strategic Grains Reserves Programmes (SGRP), and the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme (RUWASSAN), among others (Idachaba, 1988; Ayoola, 2001; Obasi & Oguiche, 1995). The year 1999 witnessed the consolidation of all surviving programmes into the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) of the Federal Government of Nigeria (Iwuchukwu & Igbokwe, 2012). According to Akinyosoye (2005) and Iwuchukwu and Igbokwe (2012), the programmes were largely not well thought-out. They were rich in propaganda but poor in substance. They lacked adequate planning and were fundamentally devoid of sustainability; hence, only cosmetic name change was effected each time power changed hands. Consequently, the programmes are best adjudged as monumental failures.

The beginning of the Post-SAP Era was marked by the transition back to civil rule in May 1999. This period also witnessed various programmes and strategies targeted at poverty alleviation. Principal among the programmes initiated during this period were the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and the Seven-Point Agenda. NEEDS, a Nigeria's homegrown poverty alleviation strategy was designed as a medium-term strategy (2003-2007) which was derived from the country's long-term goals of poverty reduction, wealth creation, employment generation and value re-orientation. It had a nationally coordinated framework of action in close collaboration with the state and local governments (the State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS) and the Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDS) respectively (World Bank, 2010). NEEDS has four key strategies: reforming the way government and its institutions work; growing the private sector; implementing a social charter for the people; and reorientating the people with an enduring African value system (Ejimudo, 2013).

The latest poverty alleviation programme in Nigeria, N-Power, was initiated on the 8th of June 2016 by the administration of General Muhammed Buhari. Its aim was to address youth unemployment and help increase social development by engaging unemployed graduates and non-graduates between the ages of 18 and 35 for a monthly stipend (Fahd, 2020; Okogba, 2017; Sanni, 2020). The two-year paid programme engages beneficiaries in their states of residence (Press Release, 2016). Currently, N-Power comprises six distinct categories, viz. N-Teach, N-Health, N-Agro, N-Build, N-Creative and N-Tech. Both N-Teach and N-Health are exclusively available to graduates who have already completed the mandatory one-year national service, while N-Agro, N-Build, N-Creative and N-Tech are for both graduates and non-graduates (Onehi, 2020). In 2021, the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced another N-Power category known as N-Knowledge. This new category was targeted at the Nigerian youth. A component of the N-Power Programme, N-Knowledge focused on equipping young Nigerians with relevant skills and certification to become competent workers, innovators, and entrepreneurs prepared for both the domestic and global digital job market. It had the mandate of upskilling 20,000 young Nigerians on the global radar as exporters of world-class services and content in the creative and information technology sectors (Samuel, 2021).

Complementing and coexisting with the nationally coordinated poverty alleviation programmes during the Post-SAP Era are several independent poverty alleviation programmes midwifed and coordinated by state governments in the country. Arguably, the most popular of these is the Osun Youth Empowerment Scheme (OYES) of the State Government of Osun, initiated by the administration of Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola in December 2010. Several assessments have been made of the programme including Ifaturoti (2013), Iroubuisi

(2013), Badejo *et al.* (2015), Shiyanbade *et al.* (2017), and Kolawole (2021). The current study is an in-depth psychometric analysis of the perception of the direct beneficiaries of the scheme.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Dimensions of the Poverty Alleviation Framework developed by Pieterse and van Donk (2002). The framework and its relevance to the study are discussed as follows.

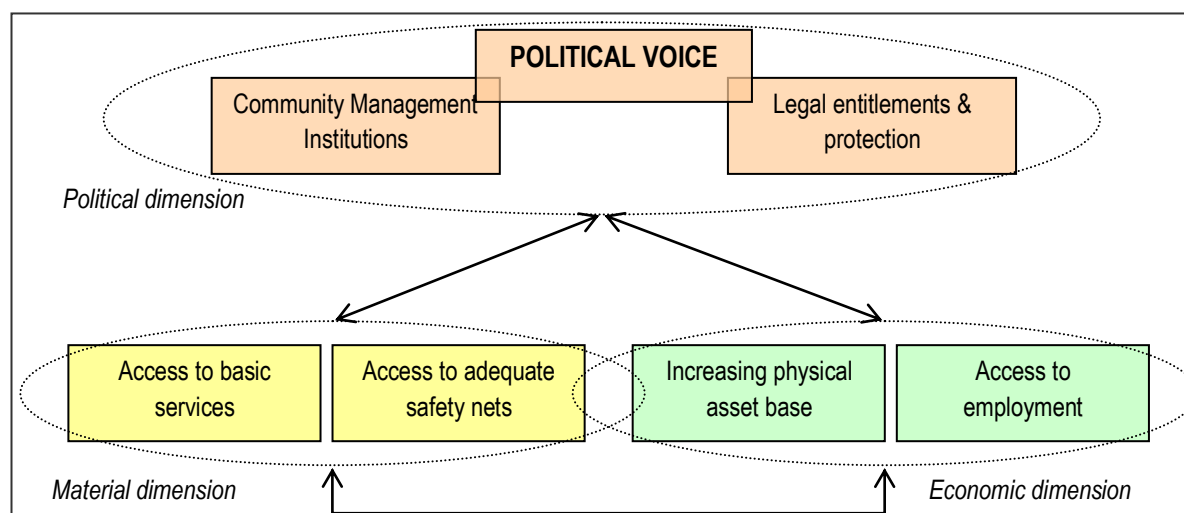


Figure 1: Dimensions of the Poverty Alleviation Framework

Source: Pieterse and van Donk (2002).

This framework seeks to explore the linkage between capacity building and poverty eradication. It can be employed in investigating what capacity building for poverty alleviation is and what the implications are for actions to be geared explicitly towards poverty alleviation. According to the proposition, we can arrive at the following conclusions, among other ones, concerning building capacity for poverty alleviation:

- i. Capacity building is linked to ‘purpose’ and is concerned with strengthening of a group of people to effectively position themselves in relation to the external environment with the intention to influence it for the benefit of its constituents.
- ii. Because poverty is multi-dimensional, poverty alleviation interventions involve multi-actor institutional arrangements.
- iii. Since poverty manifests itself differently at different scales, institutional responses will be different depending on the scale and aspect of poverty that is being addressed.
- iv. This suggests the need for a comprehensive capacity building response to assist people that define their identity and purpose in relation to poverty alleviation.

This framework is deemed relevant to this study as OYES consists of various programmes aimed at building capacity among the youth in the state towards alleviating poverty. The conclusions arrived at could be seen as some of the elements that form the entire system of the administration of OYES whose broad aim is to alleviate poverty in Osun State.

III. Methodology

3.1 Data Source, Sampling and Data Collection Procedure

Data for the study were collected with the aid of a questionnaire. The questionnaire addressed issues on the socioeconomic characteristics of the beneficiaries, the OYES programme, and how the programme has impacted on the economic wellbeing of the beneficiaries, as well as the accomplishments of the programme.

The sampling frame for the study was the 20,000 beneficiaries of the first batch of OYES in the Osun State’s 30 local government areas (LGAs) and the Area Office in Modakeke. As of the time of the survey, there were 600 OYES cadets in each local government area of the state, the only exception being Osogbo LGA where there were 2,600 beneficiaries. The 30 LGAs in Osun State are divided into three senatorial districts: Osun Central, Osun East and Osun West. Each senatorial district has 10 LGAs. Three LGAs were randomly selected without replacement from each senatorial district. These were Bolowaduro, Irepodun and Olorunda from Osun Central; Ilesa West, Ife East and Oriade from Osun East; and Aiyedade, Ede North, Ola-Oluwa from Osun West.

Of the 600 cadets in each selected LGA, 150 (25%) were selected using a combination of snowball and convenience sampling techniques. This combination was employed all the cadets could not be accessed in one

place for the survey; thus, they were contacted as available. A total of 1,350 beneficiaries of OYES were sampled. With a view to ensuring successful completion and adequate retrieval of the questionnaires, five OYES cadets were employed and trained in each LGA. In all, 45 research assistants helped in the questionnaire administration. However, only 1,318 questionnaires were successfully completed and retrieved.

3.2 Data Analysis

The Likert Scale pioneered by Likert (1961) was heavily relied on for data collection in this study as most of the variables were measured on a psychometric scale. The 5-point scale was adopted with the weights 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 for Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree respectively. Scoring was done to arrive at the Total Weight Value (TWV) for each variable through the summation of the product of the number of responses for each rating and the respective weight value. This is mathematically expressed as:

$$TWV = \sum_{i=1}^5 (N_i \times W_i) \quad (1)$$

where:

N_i = the number of respondents rating a particular variable, and

W_i = the average weight value assigned to the variable by the respondents.

Following the computation of the TWV, the Relative Importance Index (RII) of each variable was determined by dividing the TWV by the total of the number of respondents rating the variable. This is mathematically expressed as:

$$RII = \frac{TWV}{\sum_{i=1}^5 N_i} \quad (2)$$

The closer the RII value of a variable is to 5, the stronger the respondents' rating of such a variable in their perception of OYES, and the farther it is from 5 the weaker the rating of the respondents of such a variable. In addition, since 2.5 is the 50% of 5, any score below 2.5 for any given variable indicates poor performance of OYES in that regard. Examples of similar uses of the RII are found in such studies as Akinsoun (2011), Olojede (2017a, 2017b & 2019), and Sambasivan and Soon (2006), among others.

IV. Results And Discussion

4.1 Socioeconomic Profile of Respondents

The socioeconomic profiling of respondents is considered germane to this study as their socioeconomic attributes were expected to influence their opinions. The summary of findings on the socioeconomic attributes of the respondents is as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Socioeconomic Attributes of Respondents

Attribute	Class	%	Attribute	Class	%
Age	<21	5.1	Education	SSCE/Equivalent	41.1
	21-25	24.5		OND/NCE	40.8
	26-30	48.2		HND/First Degree	16.4
	31-35	17.8		Postgraduate	1.8
	>35	4.4	Discipline Category	Science/Technical	48.1
Gender	Male	66.8		Social Science/Management	36.3
	Female	33.2		Arts/Humanities	15.6
Marital Status	Single	69.2	Political Affinity	ACN	78.2
	Married	26.3		PDP	13.3
	Divorced/Widowed	4.5		Other & None	8.5

According to Table 1, the modal age group of the respondents was the 26-30 years group (48.2%). Further analysis shows that the majority were between the ages of 21 and 35 (90.5%). This shows that the OYES cadets were young and vibrant youth, an indication that the empowerment scheme was truly targeted at the youth. The gender distribution of the respondents shows that 33.2% and 66.8% were female and male respectively. The table reveals that 69.2% of the respondents were single, 26.3 were married while 4.5% were divorced/widowed. Also, according to the table, 41.1% of the respondents had a Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (SSCE) while a total of 58.9% of the respondents had a postsecondary education, the minimum of which was an ordinary national diploma (OND) or Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), accounting for 40.8%. In addition, 16.4% had a Higher National Diploma (HND) or first degree while 1.8% had a postgraduate education. The disciplines of the respondents were in three categories: Science/Technical, Social Science/Management, and Arts/Humanities (48.1%, 36.3% and 15.6% respectively).

A survey of the political affinity of the respondents reveals that with an overwhelming 78.2% majority, the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), which was the ruling party in the state as of the time of the survey, had

the highest number of OYES cadets. It was followed by the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) with 13.3%. A total of 8.5% of the respondents either belonged to other political parties (4.3%) or none (4.2%). This finding is important in the assessment of OYES in the state. The ruling party may have the highest number of the cadets; however, other political parties were also represented.

4.2 Respondents' Assessment of OYES

Tables 2 through 8 give the summaries of the perception of the OYES cadets, who were respondents, about the scheme. Seven key indicators or groups of factors were used in the assessment. Table 2 presents the respondents' assessment of OYES' administration.

Table 2: Assessment of OYES' Administration

SN	Perception	TWV	N	RII
1.	The government is serious about OYES' administration	4015	1286	3.12
2.	OYES accords top priority to effectiveness in its administration	3671	1260	2.91
3.	Partnership with bodies like the World Bank has helped enhance the success of OYES	2090	744	2.81
4.	OYES has an adequate administrative structure	3386	1258	2.69
5.	The administration of OYES is effective	3120	1265	2.47
6.	OYES is adequately funded by the state government	2916	1227	2.38
7.	OYES is supported by bodies/agencies other than the government	2369	1080	2.19

According to Table 2, with an RII score of 3.12 (62.4%), the seriousness of the government was generally perceived. Also, with a score of 2.91 (58.2%), the respondents were generally of the opinion that OYES accords top priority to effectiveness in its administration. The two other variables to which the respondents gave pass marks are the views that the partnership between the state government and other bodies, such as the World Bank, has helped enhance the success of OYES, and that the scheme has an adequate administrative structure. These were scored 2.81 (56.2%) and 2.69 (53.8%) respectively. Other findings from Table 2 are that OYES was not being adequately funded by the state government, and that it was not enjoying the support of bodies and/or agencies other than the government. These variables were scored 2.38 (47.6%) and 2.19 (43.8%) respectively.

Table 3: Political Interference in OYES

SN	Perception	TWV	N	RII
1.	There are more ACN members among OYES beneficiaries than of other political parties	5172	1292	4.00
2.	Politically active youths are defecting to ACN to benefit from OYES	4853	1294	3.75
3.	Political affiliation influences qualification as an OYES beneficiary	4469	1294	3.45
4.	Benefits, rights and privileges are apportioned based on a quota system that prejudicially favours ACN members	3674	1220	3.01
5.	You cannot be a beneficiary of OYES if you do not belong to ACN	3626	1254	2.89

It is deducible from Table 3 that political interference had an expression over OYES. According to the table, there were more ACN members among OYES beneficiaries than there were members of other political parties (4.00 or 80.0%). This might be part of the reason why some politically active youths were seen to be defecting to the ruling party (3.75 or 75.0%), especially when they could argue it that political affiliation influenced qualification as an OYES beneficiary (3.45 or 69.0%); that benefits, rights and privileges were apportioned based on a quota system that prejudicially favoured ACN members (3.01 or 60.2%); and that you could not be a beneficiary of OYES if you did not belong to ACN (2.89 or 56.8%). This tends to suggest that the state government might be using OYES as a weapon of politics.

Table 4: Assessment of the Multipartite Nature of OYES

SN	Perception	TWV	N	RII
1.	The multipartite nature of OYES has contributed to its success	4128	1268	3.26
2.	The multipartite nature of OYES has enhanced capacity building for economic development in the state	3309	1218	2.72
3.	The multipartite nature of OYES has enabled it to positively impact the lives of beneficiaries than it would have been otherwise	3579	1318	2.72
4.	The multipartite nature of OYES is just an avenue for wasting funds that could be spent on better programmes/projects	2669	1244	2.15
5.	The multipartite nature of OYES has been rather counterproductive	2717	1294	2.10
6.	OYES would be more successful with fewer programmes	2434	1242	1.96

Table 4 presents the respondents' assessment of the multipartite nature of OYES. According to the table, the respondents were generally of the view that the multipartite nature of OYES contributed to its perceived success (3.26 or 65.2%). They also believed, to a large extent, that the multipartite nature of OYES

enhanced capacity building for economic development in the state (2.72 or 54.4%), and that it enabled OYES to positively impact the lives of beneficiaries than it would have been otherwise (2.72 or 54.4%). Further accentuating these were the scores given to the variables that assessed the possible downsides of the multipartite nature of the scheme. Generally, it could be said that the respondents did not believe that the multipartite nature of OYES was just an avenue for wasting funds that could be spent on better programmes/projects (2.15 or 43%). Similarly, they did not strongly think that the multipartite nature of OYES had been counterproductive (2.10 or 42.0%). Moreover, they tended to not believe that OYES could be more successful with fewer programmes (1.96 or 39.2%).

Table 5: OYES and Wellbeing

SN	Perception	TWV	N	RII
1.	Cadets would rather accept an alternative employment offer	4664	1294	3.60
2.	OYES has enhanced the socioeconomic wellbeing of the beneficiaries	3556	1294	2.75
3.	OYES has made meaningful economic impact on the beneficiaries	3278	1288	2.55
4.	Cadets are significantly better-off than they were before enlisting	3132	1292	2.42
5.	Cadets' stipends are commensurate with their academic qualifications	2682	1294	2.07
6.	OYES cadets are satisfied with their monthly allowances	2230	1270	1.76
7.	OYES cadets are adequately remunerated	2233	1318	1.69

In their assessment of how OYES had fared in terms of their wellbeing, the cadets generally believed that their welfare had not significantly improved consequent upon their enrolment in the scheme. According to Table 5, the cadets would rather accept an alternative employment offer (3.60 or 72.0%). This suggests that their welfare expectations were not being met. However, the respondents believed that the scheme had enhanced their socioeconomic wellbeing (2.75 or 55.0%) and that it had made meaningful economic impact on them (2.55 or 51.0%). Carefully analysed, it is arguable that the OYES beneficiaries only saw the scheme as enhancing their socioeconomic wellbeing and making meaningful economic impact on them because without it they could not be earning the stipends they were being paid. This inference can be said to be statistically valid as the respondents did not believe that they were significantly well-off compared to when they had not enlisted in the scheme (2.42 or 48.4%).

Furthermore, the cadets were not of the opinion that their monthly stipends were commensurate with their academic qualifications (2.07 or 41.4%). The variable probably scored that high because there were senior school certificate holders among the respondents. Further analysis would most likely reveal that most of the cadets who thought that their monthly stipends were commensurate with their academic qualifications would be among the least educated among them. Apparently, the minority of the respondents were satisfied with their monthly allowances (1.76 or 35.2%). In addition, a lesser proportion thought they were being adequately remunerated (1.69 or 33.8%). Thus, it can be inferred that the welfare of OYES cadets was not adequately taken care of by the scheme.

Table 6: Assessment of the Economic Impact of OYES in Osun State

SN	Perception	TWV	N	RII
1.	OYES has significantly reduced unemployment in the state	3567	1301	2.74
2.	OYES has made meaningful economic impact on the state	3262	1268	2.57
3.	OYES has helped beneficiaries to acquire skills for self-employment	3181	1256	2.53
4.	OYES has enhanced the youth productivity through skills acquisition	3006	1264	2.38
5.	OYES has generated multiplier effect on the economy of the state	3039	1318	2.31
6.	OYES has enhanced the youth capacity building in the state	2393	1292	1.85
7.	Beneficiaries of OYES training programmes have been able to set up their own businesses upon completion	2234	1298	1.72
8.	OYES has significantly reduced poverty in the state	2147	1318	1.63

In their assessment of the economic impact of OYES in the state (Table 6), the respondents generally opined that it had significantly reduced unemployment (2.74 or 54.8%) and that it had made meaningful economic impact on the state (2.57 or 51.4%). They also believed that the scheme had empowered beneficiaries in terms of skills acquisition for self-employment (2.53 or 50.6%). However, the cadets tended to not believe that the scheme had enhanced productivity among the youth in the state owing to skills acquisition (2.38 or 47.6%). Also, they neither thought that the scheme had generated multiplier effect on the economy of the state (2.31 or 46.2%) nor believed that it had enhanced the youth capacity building (1.85 or 37.0%). Moreover, the cadets did not think that the beneficiaries of OYES training programmes had been able to set up their own businesses after graduating from the training (1.72 or 34.4%) or that it had significantly reduced poverty in the state (1.63 or 32.6%).

Table 7: Respondents' Overall Perception of OYES

SN	Perception	TWV	N	RII
1.	OYES' critics are political antagonists of the state government	4541	1260	3.60
2.	OYES has surpassed all previous poverty alleviation programmes in the state	4276	1318	3.24
3.	The achievements of OYES have been exaggerated by the government	3806	1278	2.98
4.	OYES' critics are wrong in their criticisms of its programmes	3833	1286	2.98
5.	There are better ways of alleviating poverty in the state than OYES	3861	1300	2.97
6.	OYES is nothing but a gimmick to embezzle and misappropriate funds	1452	1230	1.18
7.	OYES is nothing but a political propaganda	998	936	1.07

Despite generally scoring OYES low on some key factors, the respondents' overall perception of the scheme suggests that there were desirable things about it. According to Table 7, the respondents believed that the critics of the scheme were political antagonists of the state government (3.60 or 72.0%). Also, in their view, OYES had surpassed all previous poverty alleviation programmes in the state (3.24 or 64.8%). However, they thought that the achievements of the scheme had rather been exaggerated by the government (2.98 or 59.6%). This did not prevent them from emphasizing that the critics of the scheme were wrong in their criticisms (2.98 or 59.6%), though they also believed that there were better ways of alleviating poverty in the state than OYES (2.97 or 59.4%). As to whether OYES was nothing but a gimmick to embezzle or misappropriate funds, and that the scheme was nothing but a political propaganda, the respondents tended to disagree as these variables were scored 1.18 (23.6%) and 1.07 (21.4%) respectively.

Table 8: Assessment of OYES as a Model

SN	Perception	TWV	N	RII
1.	Other states in Nigeria should adopt OYES as a template for their own empowerment or poverty alleviation/eradication programmes	4370	1274	3.43
2.	The federal government should adopt OYES for national poverty alleviation/eradication programmes	4318	1296	3.33
3.	OYES should be allowed to continue in the state	4326	1306	3.31
4.	OYES is overall a successful scheme	3927	1266	3.10
5.	OYES is sustainable	3438	1259	2.73

By and large, the respondents' assessment of OYES revealed that they would recommend it as a model (Table 8). According to Table 8, not only did they agree that OYES was a successful scheme overall (3.10 or 62.0%) and that it was sustainable (2.73 or 54.6%), but they also believed that it should be allowed to continue in the state (3.31 or 66.2%). Moreover, they believed that other states in Nigeria should adopt OYES as a template for their own empowerment or poverty alleviation/eradication programmes (3.43 or 68.6%) and that the federal government should adopt it for national poverty alleviation/eradication programmes (3.33 or 66.6%).

V. Summary Of Findings, Conclusions And Recommendations

This study undertook an assessment of the Osun Youth Empowerment Scheme (OYES) of the Osun State Government, Nigeria, from the beneficiaries' point of view. It was found that the scheme was truly targeted at the youth who were not discriminated against based on gender or marital status. Most of the beneficiaries were found to have a postsecondary education while a negligible proportion had a postgraduate education. Their disciplines cut across Science/Technical, Social Science/Management, and Arts/Humanities. Most of the beneficiaries were members of the ruling party in the state.

Generally perceived was a reasonable level of seriousness on the part of the state government, and that the partnership between it and other bodies, such as the World Bank, helped enhance the success of the scheme. On the other hand, it was found that OYES did not have an adequate administrative structure, and that it was not being adequately funded with the state government as the sole funder. In addition, political interference was found to have an expression over the scheme as it was perceived that political affiliation influenced qualification and access to certain benefits, rights and privileges. Moreover, it was revealed that the multipartite nature of the scheme contributed to its perceived success, enhanced capacity building for economic development in the state, and positive impact on the lives of beneficiaries. Generally, the respondents did not consider the multipartite nature of OYES an avenue for wasting state funds.

Beneficiaries generally believed that their welfare did not improve significantly consequent upon their enrolment in the scheme. Most of them would rather accept an alternative employment offer, suggesting that their welfare expectations were not being met. However, they believed that the scheme had enhanced their socioeconomic wellbeing and made meaningful economic impact on them in a way, likely because were better-off compared to when they had not enlisted in the scheme. Furthermore, they claimed that their monthly stipends were not commensurate with their academic qualifications. In their assessment of the economic impact of the scheme in the state, they generally opined that it had significantly reduced unemployment and made meaningful economic impact on the state. They also believed that it had empowered beneficiaries in terms of

skills acquisition for self-reliance. However, they did not believe that the scheme had enhanced productivity among the youth, generated multiplier effect on the economy, or enhanced the youth capacity building in the state. Moreover, they claimed that the scheme's training programmes had neither helped them set up their own businesses nor significantly reduced poverty in the state.

Despite generally scoring OYES low on some variables of assessment, it was generally perceived by the beneficiaries that the critics of the scheme were wrong and anti-government. They also opined that OYES had surpassed all previous poverty alleviation programmes in the state thereby dismissing the claim that it was a gimmick to embezzle/misappropriate funds or a mere political propaganda. The respondents' overall assessment of OYES revealed that they would recommend it as a model. They agreed that it was both a successful and sustainable scheme that should not only be allowed to continue in the state but also be introduced in other states and by the federal government as a template for empowerment or poverty alleviation/eradication programmes.

Considering the positive disposition of the beneficiaries to OYES, it is hereby recommended that the scheme be allowed to continue in the state and beyond. However, all the shortcomings identified should be conscientiously addressed. Specifically, more funds should be committed to the scheme, and political interference should be checked. In addition, the welfare of the cadets should be prioritized; their stipends should be raised, especially with reference to their academic qualifications. Where possible, deserving and qualified cadets could be upgraded to the mainstream civil service in the state. Moreover, the efficacy of skills acquisition towards self-reliance should be emphasized and ensured. Where required, outstanding trainees should be provided with sufficient credit facilities to set them up consequent upon a successful training. Furthermore, the administrative structure should be overhauled towards better efficiency.

References

- [1]. Adebayo, A. A. (2006). Youth Unemployment and the National Directorate of Employment Self-Employment Programmes. *The Nigerian Journal of Economics and Social Studies*, 41(1), 81-102.
- [2]. Ajakaiye, D. O., & Adeyeye, V. A. (1999). Concepts, Measurement and Causes of Poverty. *CBN Economic & Financial Review*, 39(4).
- [3]. Akinosun, F. O. (2011). Assessment of the Efficacy of Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Osun State, Nigeria. Unpublished PhD thesis. Department of Public Administration, Ambrose Alli University, Edo State, Nigeria.
- [4]. Akinyosoye, V. O. (2005). *Government and Agriculture in Nigeria: Analysis of Policies, Programmes and Administration*. Ibadan: Macmillan Nigeria Publishers Limited.
- [5]. Ayoola, G. B. (2001). *Essays on the Agricultural Economy: A Book of Readings on Agricultural Development Policy and Administration in Nigeria*, Ibadan: TMA Publishers.
- [6]. Badejo, B. T., Agunyai, S. C., & Adeyemi, O. O. (2015). Policy, Youth Recruitment and Empowerment in Nigeria: A Case Study of Osun State Youth Empowerment Scheme (OYES). *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(1), 383-393.
- [7]. DOI:10.5901/mjss.2015.v6n1s1p384
- [8]. CBN (1999). Study on Poverty Assessment and Alleviation in Nigeria. Available at: www.cbn.gov.ng
- [9]. Ejimudo, K. B. O. (2013). The Problematic Development Planning in Nigeria: Critical Discourse. *Journal of Developing Country Studies*, 3(4), 67-80.
- [10]. Fahd, A. (2020, November 22). Is the N-Power programme key to delivering a campaign promise? *Ventures Africa*. Available at: <https://venturesafrica.com/n-power-key-to-delivering-campaign-promise/>
- [11]. Global Action on Aging (2009). Rural Poverty in Nigeria. Rural Poverty Portal, Nigeria. Available at: <http://www.globalaging.org>
- [12]. Idachaba, F. S. (1988). Strategies for Achieving Food Self-Sufficiency in Nigeria. Keynote Address, 1st National Congress of Science and Technology, University of Ibadan, 16th August.
- [13]. Ifaturoti, F. (2013, 16th November). Assessing Osun Youth Empowerment Scheme. *Osun News*. Available at: <http://www.osun.gov.ng/>
- [14]. Iroubuisi, N. A (2013). Low crime in Osun linked to Aregbesola's youth's empowerment schemes. Course 22 seminar held at Sani Abacha Hall of the National Defence College Abuja. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/offsite_event.php?id=6008765000187&value=0¤cy=USD
- [15]. Iwuchukwu, J. C., & Igbokwe, E. M. (2012). Lessons from Agricultural Policies and Programmes in Nigeria. *Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization*, 5(11), 11-21.
- [16]. Kolawole, R. J. (2021): Evaluation of Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Nigeria: The Demand Driven Approach Perspective. *International Journal of Development and Management Review (INJODEMAR)* 16(1), 161-177.
- [17]. Likert, R. A. (1932). Technique for the Measurement of Attitudes. *Archives of Psychology*, 140, 1-55.

- [18]. Nnabuike O. L. (2014). Evaluation of Participatory Poverty Reduction through Water Delivery Support of Local Empowerment and Environmental Management Project (LEEMP) in Rural Southeast Nigeria. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- [19]. NBS (2006). Socio-Economic Survey on Nigeria. Abuja: Federal Government of Nigeria.
- [20]. NBS (2009). Poverty Profile for Nigeria. Abuja: Federal Government of Nigeria.
- [21]. NBS (2010). Nigeria Poverty Profile Report 2010. Abuja: Federal Government of Nigeria.
- [22]. Obasi, I. N. & Oguche, D. (1995). Innovative Programmes in Rural Development: An Evaluation of the Better Life Programme Using the APBS Framework. In E. C. Eboh, C. U. Okoye, & D. Ayichi (eds). Rural Development in Nigeria: Concepts, Process, and Prospects. Enugu: Auto Century Publishing Company.
- [23]. Ogwumike F. O. (1998). Poverty Alleviation Strategies in Nigeria. In Measuring and Monitoring Poverty in Nigeria, Proceedings of the 7th Annual Conference of the Zonal Research Units of CBN.
- [24]. Okogba, E. (2017, June 13). Facts you need to know about N-Power. Vanguard Newspaper.
- [25]. Available at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/06/facts-need-know-n-power/>
- [26]. Olojede, O., Daramola, O., & Olufemi, B. (2017a). Metropolitan Transport Safety and Security: An African Experience. *Journal of Transportation Safety and Security*, 9(4), 383–402.
- [27]. Olojede, O., Yoade, A., & Olufemi, B. (2017b). Determinants of Walking as an Active Travel Mode in a Nigerian City. *Journal of Transport and Health*, 6, 327–334.
- [28]. Olojede, O. A., Agbola, S. B., & Samuel, K. J. (2019). Residents' Assessment of Local Government Road Infrastructure Delivery in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. *Local Economy*, 34(4), 346–363.
- [29]. Onehi, V. (2020, July 3). Six jobs available for N-Power Batch C applicants. Daily Trust Newspaper. Available at: <https://dailytrust.com/six-jobs-available-for-n-power-batch-c-applicants.html>
- [30]. Pieterse, E., & van Donk, M. (2002). Capacity Building for Poverty Eradication. Concept Paper prepared for Sedibeng Centre for Organisational Effectiveness.
- [31]. Press Release (2016, June 8). Nigeria begins recruitment of 500,000 unemployed graduates.
- [32]. Premium Times. Available at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/204953-nigeria-begins-recruitment-of-500000-unemployed-graduates.html>
- [33]. Sambasivan, M., & Soon, Y. W. (2007). Causes and Effects of Delays in Malaysian Construction Industry. *International Journal of Project Management*, 25, 517-526.
- [34]. Samuel, E. (2021, November 8). Npower: FG Starts N-Knowledge Training for Successful Candidates. Dope Gossip. Available at: <https://dopegossip.com/npower-fg-starts-n-knowledge-training-nationwide/>
- [35]. Sanni, K. (2020, March 2). N-Power: Over 400,000 youth enrolled in social investment programmes – Minister. Premium Times. Available at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/379957-n-power-over-400000-youth-enrolled-in-social-investment-programmes-minister.html>
- [36]. Shiyabade, B. W., Odunlade, A. O., Rotimi, & O. G., Ganiyu, A. (2017). Re-Examination of Effectiveness of OYES on Youth Unemployment and Poverty Reduction in Osun State, Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 22(9), 1–17. DOI: 10.9790/0837-2209140117
- [37]. UN (2015). Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015. Available at: <https://www.un.org/ga/search/visymbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E>
- [38]. UNDP (1999). Human Development Report. A Publication of UNDP. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [39]. UNDP (2006). Human Development Report. A Publication of UNDP. New York: Macmillan.
- [40]. UNDP (2008). Human Development Report, 2007/2008. A Publication of UNDP. New York: Macmillan.
- [41]. UNDP (2009). Human Development Report. A Publication of UNDP. New York: Macmillan.
- [42]. UNDP (2010). Human Development Report. A Publication of UNDP. New York: Macmillan.
- [43]. UNDP & UNICEF (2002). Millennium Development Goals Africa: Promises and Progresses.
- [44]. A report prepared by UNDP and UNICEF at the request of the G-8 Personal Representatives for Africa. New York.

Folaranmi Olufisayo Akinosun. "A Psychometric Assessment of the OSUN Youth Empowerment Scheme (OYES) Of the OSUN State Government of Nigeria." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 27(05), 2022, pp. 22-31.