

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPOWERMENT AND SOCIAL INVESTMENT SCHEMES ON POVERTY REDUCTION: A STUDY OF OREDO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA.

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Abstract

This study examined the role of local government in poverty alleviation in Oredo Local Government Area, Edo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the research was carried out to determine if there is any significant relationship between the Local Government development scheme and reduced poverty and a substantial relationship between the Local Government social investment transfer scheme. A survey research design method was adopted. Data was collected through the administration of a questionnaire to selected respondents. Data analysis of the research questions was done using the frequency count and percentages while the hypotheses were tested using multivariate regression analysis. The findings in this study revealed no significant relationship between local government development schemes and reduced poverty in Oredo Local Government Area and no significant relationship between the Local Government social investment transfer scheme in Oredo Local Government Area. Based on the findings, it was recommended that Local Government Areas review and revise their poverty alleviation strategies to ensure they are effectively targeting the root causes of poverty in their respective areas. This may involve conducting thorough needs assessments and consulting with local communities to tailor interventions that address specific challenges.

Keywords: Poverty reduction, Unemployment, Socio-economic impact, Economic development.

Introduction

Poverty remains a significant challenge in Nigeria, with a substantial portion of the population living below the poverty line. As the administrative tier closest to grassroots communities, local governments play a critical role in implementing poverty alleviation programs. These efforts often include empowerment initiatives and social investment schemes aimed at enhancing economic opportunities, fostering self-reliance, and improving the living standards of vulnerable populations.

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In Nigeria, local governments are tasked with the dual responsibility of executing federal and state policies while addressing the unique developmental needs of their jurisdictions. Empowerment programs frequently involve micro-financing, vocational training, and support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). These initiatives are designed to equip individuals with the skills, resources, and opportunities needed to achieve economic independence. A notable example is the National Social Investment Program (NSIP), launched in 2015, which represents a comprehensive federal approach to poverty reduction, with local governments serving as key implementation partners (Olaniyi et al., 2023).

The NSIP encompasses several components, including:

1. **N-Power:** Provides job training and temporary employment to young Nigerians, fostering technical and entrepreneurial skills.
2. **Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT):** Offers financial aid to impoverished households, empowering them to invest in education and healthcare.
3. **Government Enterprise and Empowerment Program (GEEP):** Facilitates access to microcredit for entrepreneurs to stimulate small business growth.

These programs collectively aim to reduce poverty and stimulate economic growth by addressing unemployment and promoting self-reliance (Adebayo and Yusuf, 2022). However, their success largely depends on effective implementation at the local level, where the realities of poverty and inequality are most acute.

Empowerment and social investment schemes have shown varying degrees of success in addressing poverty and unemployment across the country. Research highlights the effectiveness of micro-financing programs in fostering entrepreneurship and self-employment among marginalized groups. For instance, a study by Eze and Olanrewaju (2021) on micro-finance initiatives in Oredo Local Government Area (LGA) revealed that access to credit enabled small business owners to expand their operations and improve household incomes, significantly reducing poverty levels. Similarly, participants in vocational training programs reported enhanced skills and higher employability, contributing to poverty alleviation.

The N-Power program has been particularly transformative in many LGAs, including Oredo. By equipping participants with marketable skills, the program has enabled many beneficiaries to transition from government dependency to self-sustaining entrepreneurship. According to Agbonlahor (2022), most N-Power participants in Edo State now run their businesses, contributing to local economic development.

Beyond employment generation, social investment programs have addressed broader dimensions of poverty, such as education and healthcare access. For example, the Conditional Cash Transfer Program has empowered families to invest in their children's education and access medical care, yielding long-term socioeconomic benefits (Akinola and Ojo, 2021). These outcomes underscore the multidimensional impact of social investment schemes on poverty reduction and self-sufficiency.

Challenges and Research Focus on Empowerment and Social Investment Programmes in Oredo LGA. Despite notable successes, several challenges hinder the effectiveness of empowerment

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and social investment programs in Oredo Local Government Area (LGA) and similar regions. A primary obstacle is inadequate funding, which significantly limits the scope and reach of these initiatives. According to Edeh and Uche (2023), financial constraints have caused delays in program implementation and reduced the number of beneficiaries. Additionally, bureaucratic inefficiencies and corruption at the local government level often compromise the integrity and transparency of these programmes.

Another critical issue is the sustainability of empowerment initiatives. Many programmes lack robust long-term strategies to ensure continuous support and development for beneficiaries. For example, some participants in the N-Power program have struggled to maintain their businesses after completing the programme due to limited access to follow-up resources and mentorship (Okojie, 2023). Bridging these gaps requires a more integrated approach, combining short-term interventions with long-term capacity building and sustained support mechanisms.

This study explores several key questions related to local government empowerment and social investment programmes in Oredo LGA, including:

- What is the impact of local government empowerment initiatives on poverty reduction?
- How have social investment schemes influenced self-employment and income generation among residents?
- What challenges are faced with implementing these programmes?
- How do beneficiaries perceive the effectiveness of local government schemes in alleviating poverty?

The study aims to evaluate the impact of local government empowerment and social investment schemes on poverty reduction, assess their influence on self-employment and income generation, identify the challenges encountered during implementation, and analyze beneficiaries' perceptions of these programmes.

Research hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested to guide this study:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between local government empowerment development scheme and reduced poverty in Oredo Local Government Area

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between local government empowerment development scheme and reduced poverty in Oredo Local Government Area

Conceptual Clarification

Concept of Poverty

Poverty may be seen as a reflection of glaring defects in the economy as evidenced in mass penury, pauperization of the working and professional class including artisans, mass unemployment and poor welfare services. It denotes absence or lack of basic necessities of life including material wealth, common place regular flow of wages and income and inability to sustain oneself based on existing resources available. In such a state, the means of achieving

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minimum subsistence, health, education, and comfort are absent (CBN, 2014). Similarly, Johnson (2014) defined poverty as “a situation where the resources of individuals or families are inadequate to provide a socially acceptable standard of living” In other words; the individuals live below the conventional poverty line demarcating the poor from the non-poor. The German government in 1992, described poor people as “those who are unable to live a decent life”. In line with the above definition, FOS, (2016) defined poverty as “not having enough to eat, a high rate of infant mortality, a low life expectancy, low educational opportunities, poor water, inadequate healthcare, unfit housing and lack of active participation in the decision-making process” (Federal Ministry of Economic Co-operation and Development).

Poverty is defined as the condition in which individuals or households in Oredo Local Government Area lack the financial resources and necessities required to maintain a minimum standard of living. Poverty is assessed based on income levels, access to essential services, and the ability to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, and education.

Perception of Poverty

The so-called ‘war on poverty, which is being waged all over the world, especially in developing countries, seems destined to be one of the longest wars in human history. To wage this war effectively, it is necessary that we are able to identify, define and describe poverty (Anyebe, 2014). Even though Zweig (2008) points out that it is easier to speak of poverty than to define it, a few writers on the subject attempted to define it. Looking at the economics of developing countries characterized by low income, low productivity or outputs leading to low savings and investments consequently there is shortage of capital for development leading to low income. This led Gunnar Myrdal to refer to this situation as visual circle of underdevelopment: “You are poor because you are poor” (Abdulsalami, 2016).

Aluko (2015) defines poverty as “lack of command over basic consumption needs such as food, clothing, and or shelter” Such lack of resources to meet the basic needs incapacitates the individual in protecting himself against social, economic and political deprivations.

Provisions of the National Social Investment Programme

The National Social Investment Programme aims to reduce poverty, fight hunger, and improve poor human development indices (FGN, 2017). It is coordinated by the Office of Social Investment within the Nigerian Vice President's office with a national coordinator. To ensure credible targeting of the poor and vulnerable, a national social registry was established. The NSIP has four nationally designed and implemented suite programmes: the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP), Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP), and N-Power Programme, among others.

N-Power Youth Empowerment Scheme

N-Power is a job creation and empowerment programme of the National Social Investment Programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria. The N-Power programme has been designed for young Nigerians between the ages of 18 and 35. It is a paid volunteering programme of a two-year duration. In the specifications of the programme, graduates are required to undertake their primary tasks in identified public services within their proximate communities. All N-Power beneficiaries are entitled to computer devices that contain information necessary for their specific engagement, as well as information for their continuous training and development (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

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The programme is divided into the following categories: a. The Graduate Category, which comprises the N-Power Volunteer Corps
b. The Non-Graduate Category, comprising N-Power Knowledge and N-Power Build.

Key Areas of N-Power

According to the N-Power Information Guide (2017), volunteers are expected to provide teaching, instructional, and advisory solutions in four (4) key areas.

N-Power Teach

This category of beneficiaries is expected to help improve basic education delivery in Nigeria. N-Power Teach Volunteers are deployed as teacher assistants in primary schools that appear to be understaffed in Nigeria. They are not expected to replace the current teachers but to work as support teachers across the country, assisting with teaching, school management, and other functions within the schools. Where possible, they are also required to assist in providing basic education to children in marginalized communities (N-Power Information Guide, 2017). N-Power Teach (STEM) is also a component of the N-Power Teach programme. Through this programme, young graduates with skills and interest in computer programming and other related fields are required to assist in the implementation of the Federal Government's STEM Programme for primary and secondary schools in the country (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

N-Power Health

Under this strand of the programme, N-Power Health beneficiaries are required to assist in improving and promoting preventive healthcare in their communities to vulnerable members of society, including pregnant women and children, as well as families and individuals. This area is reserved for those who have studied health and medical-related courses at certificate courses and diploma levels (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

N-Power Agro

N-Power Agro beneficiaries are intended to provide advisory services to farmers across the country. They are expected to disseminate the knowledge amassed by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in the area of extension services. They are also required to gather data on Nigeria's agricultural assets. This area is meant for youth who have studied agricultural-related courses (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

The Voluntary Asset and Income Declaration Scheme (VAIDS)

VAIDS seeks to encourage non-compliant and partially compliant taxpayers to voluntarily declare their correct income and assets and pay the appropriate tax due to the government. The N-Power VAIDS volunteers are expected to function as community tax liaison officers and have the following key responsibilities: tax promotion, document review, record keeping, answering online inquiries, customer management, and report writing, among others. This key area engages youth with post-tertiary qualifications in computer and information science-related courses (N-Power Information Guide, 2017).

Empirical Review

Various efforts, both at recent and time past, have been employed to curb the menace of poverty in Nigeria by various successive governments. The impacts of these efforts have been debated in various quarters. Isola, *et al* (2023) examined the impact of various poverty alleviation schemes in Nigeria. The use of regression analysis was adopted to examine the effects and the relationship

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between poverty reduction schemes and income level, employment generation, food security, and education attainment. It was found that poverty reduction schemes have led to an increase in the level of income, employment level, food security, and an increase in literacy level. Therefore, it is suggested that a holistic approach should be employed by both the public and private sectors through massive investment in agriculture to ensure food security, cottage industry establishment to increase employment levels, and education to enhance literacy levels. These measures will lead to better opportunities for higher income in order to achieve meaningful poverty reduction in the country.

Isiaka (2022) in a study primarily examined the impact of Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) on poverty alleviation between the 2011 and 2015 in Kwara State, Nigeria. Primary data was majorly employed in the study and collected through questionnaire and interview. Eighty-five (85) respondents were chosen using simple random techniques among the beneficiaries of the scheme. The data collected was analysed through descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of the study show that YES has statistically significant impact on the standard of living of the respondents and equally reduce their level of poverty. The findings equally show positive and strong correlation between poverty alleviation and YES, $r = .69$, $n = 85$, $p < .0005$. Majority of the respondents also satisfied with the performance of the YES in Kwara State. Recommendations are given based on the performance of YES and obstacles encountered by the beneficiaries in order to further enhance the living condition of the latter.

Kolawole (2024) undertook a review to examine why poverty still remains high despite various policies implemented by the Nigerian government. The review showed that the poverty alleviation measures implemented so far have focused more on growth, basic needs and rural development approaches. Most of the poverty alleviation strategies adopted in Nigeria were well focused on rural areas and agricultural sector. It was observed that most of these programmes before and during Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) were supply driven which could not meet the needs of the poor and so they had little effect in alleviating poverty. After SAP, some programmes implemented used demand driven approach to meet the target poor. Although, poverty reduced due to this approach but the very poor (vulnerable) were not targeted in some of these programmes. The paper recommended that there should be prevention of elite capture through proper targeting in any project.

Oyadiran and Ayi (2023) examined the impact of social investment programmes on entrepreneurial development in Nigeria. Several social investment schemes were discussed in the light of analyzing their impact on entrepreneurial development. The study adopted documentary source of data and the findings revealed that there are several challenges impeding the implementation of social investment programmes and these include: poor coordination, poor/inadequate budget provision, weak monitoring and evaluation process, inadequate continuity process, poor follow-up process and so on. To this end, the study recommends adequate funding for social investment programmes. Governments across levels should look beyond the proceeds from crude oil. Other sources of revenue can be adequately explored by the government to generate adequate funds to finance social investment programmes across the country. Continuity in the implementation of social investment schemes should be embraced by political office holders. Social investment programmes which performed well can be elongated or sustained in order to improve entrepreneurial development. Proper follow-up/mentoring of young entrepreneurs should be encouraged. This would guide them through the difficulties usually experienced in business. Grants, loans or stipends allocated to entrepreneurs should be

commensurate to present economic situation. Monies disbursed should be able to sustain the businesses of beneficiaries.

Dodo and Isa (2024) examined the prospect of N-Power Social Investment on Reducing Unemployment in Maiha Local Government Area, Adamawa State-Nigeria. Primary data were used sourced through distributions of questionnaires to 50 sampled populations. Ordinary Least Square (OLS) econometric technique was employed to analyze the impact of Income Earn per Month (INCM), N-Power Beneficiaries (NPB), and Skills Acquired from the scheme (SAQ) on Social Investment (SIV) proxy by savings. The result revealed that INCM and NPB have positives and statistically significant on social investment (SIV) with coefficient values 0.2342222 and 13380.08 respectively. While the coefficient value of SAQ is -1560.075 is not statistically significant on social investment (SIV). However, the R² measured the degree of variation of social investment was 93% when the model and the remaining 7% are error terms. Furthermore, the Descriptive statistics test was conducted to measure the mean, median, maximum, minimum as well as standard deviations of all variables in the model and the Jarque-Bera probability values of the variables are less than one it proved that the residuals are normally distributed in the model. Ultimately, the study is recommending that the government should: Provide suitable fiscal incentives to agricultural and industrial sectors to promote self-reliance and reduce the rate of rural-urban migration. Be very strict in terms of entrepreneurship practical in all institutions to make in order to make the graduates' business oriented and self-reliant. Create a peaceful political and business environment to encourage foreign direct investors to invest in our country.

Theoretical Review

The study is underpinned by circumstantial theory and human development theory of growth by Sen (1999).

Circumstantial Theory by Amartya Sen

Theoretical explanations for the persistence of poverty in both urban and rural Nigeria are woven around the objectives and subjects, as well as the nature of the phenomenon (Akeredolu – Ale, 1975). These theories have been extremely varied and have evolved over the years they include natural-circumstantial theory and urban bias theory which will be adopted in this study. The natural circumstantial theory identifies such factors in the matrix of poverty induced equations as the geographical locations and natural endowment of the environment in which person live, unemployment, old age and physical disabilities (Telia, 1977). The argument here is that the major causes of poverty are: poor environment, lack of capacity to tap the resources of the environment, inefficiency and wasteful exploitation of the environment.

The application of the circumstantial theory to this study is based on the fact that the cause of poverty in Nigeria can be traced to the inability to exploit and manage the natural resources in the country for public good, and the attainment of sustainable development. Also, the insecurity that has pervaded the nuke and crannies of the country has hindered the influx of foreign direct investment and other businesses and developmental opportunities into the country. This trend, according to the circumstantial theory has been some of the major factors responsible for corruption in Oredo Local Government Area in particular and Nigeria in general

The Human Development Theory of Growth

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Sen (1992), in his theory of poverty implies the idea that poverty is not a natural phenomenon within a larger frame of inequality problems, rather it can be eliminated if people are enabled to become autonomous from needs. No real development is possible if basic needs are not met and larger, and strata of the population are kept in a condition of dependency. Rejecting the idea of poverty as a natural object, and its inevitability in human societies helps to orient our questioning towards concrete social practices treating poverty, their transformations and their effects. As Manning (2007) observe, rapid and sustained poverty reduction requires ‘pro-poor growth’ that is a pace and pattern of growth that enhances the ability of poor women and men to participate in, contribute to and benefit from growth. In essence, growth should be broad based across sectors and regions and inclusive of the large part of the workforce that poor men and women make up. Also, policies for sustaining growth such as those aiming at strengthening institutional capacity, promoting democratic and effective governance should increase poor people’s incentives, opportunities and capabilities for employment so they can participate in and benefit from growth. The UNDP summarizes these conceptions and described the extent of poverty around the world as pervasive.

The application of this theory is based on the fact that the high level of poverty in Nigeria is due to the inability of the government at all levels in the country to provide the basic needs of the citizenry and lack of essential social safety nets. In other words, the theory anchor poverty in Nigeria to the lack of effective social policies aimed at ameliorating the flight of the vulnerable individuals in the country.

Methodology

The study employed a cross-sectional research design using questionnaires to collect data from a representative sample of 400 respondents, derived from a total population of 553,691 in Oredo Local Government Area. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were applied to ensure fair representation. Data sources included primary (field data) and secondary (existing literature) sources. A structured questionnaire was distributed to sample size of 400 respondents that cut across Oredo Local Government population. Of this number, 369 responds were received representing 92%, while 31 persons representing 8% did not respond. 92% response rate was adequate for the study. The validity and reliability of the research instrument were confirmed through expert review and Cronbach’s alpha test (0.917). Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including Pearson Product Moment Correlation, at a 5% significance level.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Demographic Analysis of Respondents

Table 1: Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	197	53.39

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Female	172	46.61
Total	369	100.0

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 suggests that majority of the respondents in this study were male. The study also showed that the female subjects are adequately represented in the study.

Table 2: Age of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent
18-20 years old	47	12.8
21-30 years old	120	32.6
31-40 years old	150	40.7
41-50 years and above	52	13.9
51 years old and above	-	-
Total	369	100.0

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 implies that majority of the respondents in this study are in the age bracket of 31-40 years old.

Table 3: Marital Status

	Frequency	Percent
Single	163	44.2
Married	197	53.5
Others	9	2.3
Total	369	100.0

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents are married. The predominance of married individuals in a state, as indicated by the data from Table 3, carries several implications for the social and economic landscape of the region. Married couples contribute to dual-income households, enhancing economic stability and purchasing power. Their spending stimulates local businesses, particularly in housing, childcare, education, and healthcare. They prioritize saving

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for children's welfare and engage in community activities, promoting social cohesion. Marriage influences policies, supports family-oriented initiatives, and fosters long-term growth.

Table 4.4: Academic Qualification

	Frequency	Percent
OND	39	10.5
BSc/HND	137	37.2
M.Sc/MBA	180	48.8
Ph.D	13	3.5
Total	369	100.0

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Table 4 shows that among the respondents, 48.8% hold M.Sc./MBA degrees, reflecting a highly educated population. This concentration of advanced qualifications suggests opportunities for economic growth, innovation, and community development. It may lead to increased productivity, entrepreneurship, and civic engagement, fostering higher job creation and better governance. However, a mismatch in local job opportunities for individuals with advanced degrees could lead to brain drain, affecting the local economy.

Table 5: Years of Service of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
0-10 years	172	46.5
15-20 years	185	50.0
30 years and above	12	3.5
Total	369	100.0

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Table 4.5 shows that the majority of respondents (50%) have 15-20 years of service, indicating a stable, experienced workforce with valuable institutional knowledge. This can enhance efficiency, mentorship, and skill development. However, the low percentage with over 30 years of service (3.5%) suggests potential challenges in succession planning. Balancing experience and fresh perspectives is crucial for organizational stability, engagement, and long-term success.

Data Analysis

Table 6: The Oredo Local Government has a functional poverty alleviation programme for the poor citizens in the area.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	52	14.0
Disagree	82	22.1

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Undecided	30	8.1
Agree	77	20.9
Strongly Agree	128	34.9
Total	369	100.0

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2024

Table 6. The implication is that majority of the respondents agree with the assertion that the Oredo Local Government has a functional poverty alleviation programme for the poor citizens in the area. Based on the data provided, it appears that a majority of respondents (55.8%) agree that the Oredo Local Government has a functional poverty alleviation programme. This suggests that there is a general perception among residents that efforts are in place to address poverty in the area. Given this perception, it is reasonable to infer that there could be a potential reduction in poverty if the programme is indeed functional and effectively implemented. However, since 36.1% of respondents disagree, there may be limitations or unmet needs in the programme’s execution that could impact its effectiveness. To ensure a significant reduction in poverty, it would be essential for Oredo Local Government to address any existing gaps, improve awareness, and enhance the reach and impact of the poverty alleviation initiatives.

Table 7: The Oredo Local Government economic empowerment development scheme has reduced poverty in the local Government area.

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Strongly disagree	116	31.4
Disagree	69	18.6
Undecided	26	6.9
Agree	95	25.6
Strongly Agree	63	17.5
Total	369	100.0

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2024

Table 7 that majority of the respondents disagree with the assertion that the Oredo Local Government economic empowerment development scheme has reduced poverty in the local Government area.

Table 8: The high rate of poverty in Oredo Local Government Area is due to the insensitivity of the Local Government Council to the problems of poverty.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	82	22.1

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Disagree	47	12.8
Undecided	30	8.1
Agree	77	20.9
Strongly Agree	133	36.1
Total	369	100.0

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2024

Table 8 implies that majority of the respondents agree with the assertion that the high rate of poverty in Oredo Local Government Area is due to the insensitivity of the Local Government Council to the problems of poverty.

Table 9: The Oredo Local Government has established economic development programmes which have drastically reduced the level of poverty amongst the citizenry.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	60	16.3
Disagree	52	14.0
Undecided	13	3.5
Agree	107	29.1
Strongly Agree	137	37.1
Total	369	100.0

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2024

Table 9 shows that 65.3% of respondents agree that Oredo Local Government's economic development programs have reduced poverty, though caution is needed due to broader economic challenges. Further data on program reach and effectiveness is required for a thorough assessment.

Test of Hypotheses

Table 10: Pearson Product Moment correlation of the significant relationship between local government empowerment development scheme and reduced poverty in Oredo Local Government Area n =369

Variables	N	\bar{x}	Std. Dev.	r	r ²	p-value	Decision
LEEDS	369	12.50	2.74	0.83	0.69	0.357	Sig
REDP		16.01	3.11				

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

r^2 = coefficient of determination; KEY: LEEDS = local economic empowerment development scheme; REDP = reduced poverty

The coefficient of determination (r) indicates that the local economic empowerment development scheme has relationship with reduced poverty and the relationship is statistically insignificant at 0.357 since this significant value is greater than 0.05 the alpha level of significance. The hypothesis which states, therefore, that there is no significant relationship between local economic empowerment development scheme and reduced poverty in Oredo Local Government Area is not rejected. The alternative hypothesis is not accepted. We therefore conclude that there is no significant relationship between local economic empowerment development scheme and reduced poverty in Oredo Local Government Area.

Discussion of findings

The study sought to ascertain the extent to which local economic empowerment development scheme reduced poverty in Oredo Local Government Area indicates that the mean score for local economic empowerment development scheme was 12.50 with a standard deviation of 2.74 while reduced poverty was 16.01 with a standard deviation of 3.11. The result also showed that there is a strong positive relationship (0.83) between local economic empowerment development scheme and reduced poverty. The coefficient of determination (r^2) associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.83 was 0.69. The coefficient of determination (r) indicates that the local economic empowerment development scheme has relationship with reduced poverty and the relationship is statistically insignificant at 0.357 since this significant value is greater than 0.05 the alpha level of significance. The hypothesis which states, therefore, that there is no significant relationship between local economic empowerment development scheme and reduced poverty in Oredo Local Government Area is not rejected. The alternative hypothesis is not accepted.

We therefore conclude that there is no significant relationship between local economic empowerment development scheme and reduced poverty in Oredo Local Government Area. The analysis suggests that while there is a positive association between the local economic empowerment development scheme and poverty reduction in Oredo Local Government Area, this relationship is not statistically significant. Although the scheme is correlated with poverty reduction, this effect could be due to chance rather than a clear causal impact, as the p-value (0.357) does not meet the standard threshold for significance.

This result implies that the scheme, as it currently operates, may not be a reliable driver of poverty reduction in the area. The findings indicate a need for possible adjustments or increased targeting within the programme to strengthen its effectiveness. For example, more tailored initiatives, additional resources, or focused interventions could be explored to make a stronger impact on poverty levels.

Furthermore, the insignificant statistical relationship suggests that additional or complementary approaches might be necessary to more effectively reduce poverty in the area. Broader job creation programs, improvements in infrastructure, or skill development initiatives could be considered alongside the empowerment scheme. While the local economic empowerment development scheme appears to have a positive association with poverty reduction, the lack of statistical significance points to the potential need for programme modifications or additional strategies to achieve substantial poverty alleviation in Oredo Local Government Area. This finding agrees with the findings by Adeyemi, *et al* (2018) who assessed the impact of the federal

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government NEEDS programme on poverty alleviation and findings revealed no significant impact of the programme on poverty alleviation in the study area.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study on the implications of local governments' poverty alleviation programmes in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of these programmes is mixed. The local economic empowerment development scheme failed to significantly reduce poverty. These results suggest that while certain initiatives show promise in contributing to sustainable development, others may require re-evaluation, redesign, and improved implementation to better address poverty reduction goals and promote broader socio-economic development in the area.

Recommendation

1. **Review and Revise Poverty Alleviation Strategies:** Local governments should review and revise their poverty alleviation strategies to ensure they are effectively targeting the root causes of poverty in their respective areas. This may involve conducting thorough needs assessments and consulting with local communities to tailor interventions that address specific challenges.
2. **Enhance Monitoring and Evaluation:** There is a need for improved monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the impact of poverty alleviation programs more accurately. Regular monitoring can help identify areas of success and areas needing improvement, allowing for timely adjustments to program implementation and reduction in corruption activities in Oredo Local government area of Edo state in general. .
3. **Invest in Education:** Given the significant impact of the universal basic education program on primary school enrollment, local governments should continue to prioritize investments in education. This may include expanding access to quality education, providing support for infrastructure development in schools, and addressing barriers to education such as poverty and gender inequality.
4. **Promote Entrepreneurship Development:** While the social investment transfer scheme did not significantly increase self-employment, local governments can explore alternative approaches to promote entrepreneurship development. This may involve offering training programs, providing access to microfinance services, and fostering a supportive environment for small business growth.

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