

**YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN EDO
STATE: AN IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE EDOJOBS PROGRAMME IN BENIN
CITY**

BY

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

BENIN CITY

OCTOBER, 2025

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**BEING A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
BENIN CITY, IN PARTIAL FUFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.Sc.) DEGREE IN PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION.**

OCTOBER, 2025

CERTIFICATION

We certify that this project work titled **“YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN EDO STATE: AN IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE EDOJOBS PROGRAMME IN BENIN CITY”** was carried out by **EDOMWANDE JOY** with matriculation number **SSC2105792** and the work is adequate in scope and quality in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) degree in Public Administration.

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DATE

DATE

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to God Almighty, for his love, and strength towards me throughout the period of this Study.

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First and foremost, I give all glory, honor, and praise to the Almighty God for His unending grace, wisdom, and strength throughout this journey. His divine guidance and favor have brought me this far, and for that, I am deeply grateful.

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the impact of the EdoJobs Programme on youth employment and economic empowerment in Benin City, Edo State. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 120 beneficiaries of the programme and analysed with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Findings show that the programme has moderately reduced youth unemployment in Benin City, with evidence of a drop in unemployment rates over recent years. About 62.5 % of respondents reported improved income levels after participation, while 37.5 % saw no change, suggesting uneven income benefits. Skill acquisition was a major success, as 87.5 % gained useful vocational, ICT, entrepreneurship skills, and 50 % started their own businesses. Training quality was rated high, with 91.7 % agreeing that content was relevant and 88.3 % affirming the competence of facilitators. However, only 41.7 % confirmed receiving adequate post-training support, indicating weak follow-up mechanisms. The main challenges identified were lack of start-up capital (41.7 %), short training duration (25 %), limited job placement (20.8 %), and low programme awareness (12.5 %). The study concludes that EdoJobs has improved youth employability and self-reliance but remains constrained by funding gaps and inadequate post-training support. It recommends stronger government–private sector collaboration, improved access to finance, and continuous mentoring to achieve sustainable youth empowerment in Edo State.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Youth employment initiatives refer to economic and labour programs which can be used to impact labour skills to young able bodied, mentally fit individual or group of young persons to enable them function in the distribution of economic and social resources, meaningful for personal wellbeing and sustainability in the society (Ajakaiye & Tella, 20). Youth unemployment is recognized as one of the socio-economic issues presently faced in Nigeria. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2023), a significant proportion of the population aged between 15 and 35 years remain unemployed, underemployed, or engaged in low-income informal activities. The implications of this widespread unemployment leads to economic inefficiency, as well as contributes to social vices like drug abuse, cultism, prostitution, illegal migration, and political thuggery (World Bank, 2021). Youth empowerment through employment initiatives can significantly decrease poverty levels and increase social stability (ILO, 2020; Obadan, 2021). In some states like Edo, where the youthful population is substantial and growing, the crisis of unemployment threatens both human capital development and long-term socio-economic growth and stability.

However, there are several underlying factors contributing to the persistent challenge of youth unemployment in Edo State, including the rapidly growing youth population, limited industrial activities, underdeveloped infrastructure, weak public-private sector collaboration, and a mismatch between the education system and the demands of the labour market (Edo State Government, 2022). Furthermore, many young people, especially graduates, lack the practical skills needed in contemporary industries, while informal employment sectors remain largely

unregulated and unstable for livelihood (Fajana, 2021). The consequence of such outcome increases the alarming rate of joblessness that pushes many youths into dependency, irregular migration, and survivalist ventures. In response, the government at various levels have made several attempts in introducing youth-focused employment and empowerment initiatives, including, National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWin), and N-Power in order to reduce unemployment rates through trainings, grants, and entrepreneurship support (Nwosu & Aniche, 2020; Bamidele & Emeh, 2022). As a result, most of these initiatives faced several challenges including limited reach of target audience, weak sustainability, poor job creation, as well as uncertain income growth (ILO, 2020).

Recognizing the gravity of the situation at hand and the need for strategic intervention to fixing the problems involved, the Edo State Government, under the leadership of Governor Godwin Obaseki, initiated the EdoJobs Programme in 2017 to initiate and track the success of job creation and economic growth initiatives. The programme was part of a broader vision to transform Edo State into an economically competitive region with inclusive growth and prosperity for its citizens (Edo State Government, 2022). As a part of the Governor's campaign, this programme was designed with the intention of creating over 200,000 jobs. Hence, the EdoJobs Programme was launched with a clear mandate to empower the youth by enhancing their employability skill, fostering entrepreneurship, driving innovation and facilitating access to sustainable livelihood and opportunities. According to Governor Godwin Obaseki (2019), over 157,000 jobs were created within the first three years of EdoJobs, reflecting the administration's commitment to youth empowerment and inclusive economic growth. Meanwhile, EdoJobs is implemented through the Edo State Skills Development Agency (EdoSDA), which functions as the coordinating body responsible for designing, executing, and monitoring job creation and skill

development initiatives in the state. The programme collaborates with local and international development partners, including private sector actors, non-governmental organizations, and community-based institutions, to offer a wide range of services to meet the needs of the people (Akinola & Eze, 2020). Some of the services offered were vocational and technical training, digital literacy, entrepreneurship development, job placement, business incubation, agribusiness support, and internships. The initiative targets young people across the three senatorial districts of the state, although a majority of its beneficiaries are concentrated in the state capital, Benin City.

According to Ukinebo Dare (2018), EdoJobs trained more than 1,200 youths in digital skills and entrepreneurship under its partnership with global firms, helping to improve employability status and digital literacy across Edo State. Also, since its inception, EdoJobs have reportedly trained thousands of youths, and facilitated job placements and business start-ups for them. Irrespective of these reported achievements, concerns were raised about the actual impact of EdoJobs on youth employment and economic empowerment in Benin City. Some observers argue that while many youths have participated in trainings, only a small fraction have secured stable employment or started viable businesses (Omoruyi & Osemwengie, 2021).

Moreover, while official statistics suggest progress, there remains a need for an objective, evidence-based assessment of the true impact of the EdoJobs Programme on youth employment and economic empowerment. Hence, this study is designed to evaluate the implementation process, outcomes, and perceived effectiveness of the EdoJobs Programme, using data collected from beneficiaries in Benin City. The focus on Benin City is deliberate, given its central role as the administrative and economic hub of Edo State and its high concentration of programme activities.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Youth unemployment have remained a persistent issue in Edo State, indicating a widespread national challenge in Nigeria. Despite the relative abundance of human capital and natural resources in Edo State, the majority of its youth population are either unemployed or underemployed. This unemployment crisis have greatly increased poverty levels, leading to increasing dependency ratios in rural-urban migration, as well as other forms of deviant behaviour like cybercrime, especially among young people who feel excluded from the economic empowerment initiatives.

Hence, the EdoJobs Programme, established by the Edo State Government in 2017, was launched as a comprehensive and innovative intervention to tackle this crisis. The programme aimed to provide young people with soft skills and hands-on training, entrepreneurship support, job matching services, to foster overall economic empowerment. However, despite several years of implementation of this programme, many critical challenges remain unaddressed. One of the major concerns is the apparent disconnect between the training and actual job placement. Also, many participants report that while they received training, they were unable to transition into full-time employment or self-sustaining businesses. This indicates a gap in the programme's structure, particularly in post-training support, accessibility to funding and mentorship.

Furthermore, monitoring and evaluation systems are either weak or not well executed, making it difficult to track the long-term impact of the EdoJobs programme on participants. The success rate tends to be reported based on the number of individuals trained rather than on qualitative indicators such as job sustainability, income growth, or business longevity. While socio-economic activities are more prominent in cities like Benin City, many youths in rural and semi-

urban areas lack access to these opportunities due to poor infrastructure, inadequate internet penetration, low literacy levels, and weak awareness campaigns. These gaps and inconsistencies point to a pressing need for a thorough assessment of the EdoJobs Programme. This study aims to bridge this gap by investigating not only the implementation strategies but also the experiences of beneficiaries, thereby providing a detailed and informative view of the programme.

1.3 Research Questions

1. To what extent has the EdoJobs programme reduced youth unemployment in Benin City?
2. How has participation in the EdoJobs programme affected the income levels and economic empowerment of beneficiaries?
3. What types of skills and entrepreneurial abilities have participants gained through the programme?
4. How effective are the training and job placement components in providing sustainable employment opportunities?
5. What challenges affect the implementation and overall success of the EdoJobs programme in Benin City?

1.4 Research Objectives

The following constitute the objectives for this study:

1. To examine the strategies and implementation framework of the EdoJobs Programme.
2. To assess the employment status and income changes of beneficiaries post-participation.
3. To evaluate the extent to which the programme has empowered beneficiaries economically.
4. To identify the challenges faced by beneficiaries during and after participation.

5. To recommend measures for improving the effectiveness and sustainability of the EdoJobs Programme.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study is limited to Benin City, the capital of Edo State. Although the programme is implemented across Edo South, Central, and North senatorial districts, the decision to focus on this urban area is necessary, due to its high concentration of EdoJobs initiatives. Moreover, there is easy access for participants and relevant agencies to collect data with limited time constraints. The study centres on evaluating the structure, strategies, and effectiveness of the EdoJobs Programme in addressing youth unemployment problems and promoting economic empowerment with specific attention given to vocational trainings, ICT and tech-related programmes, entrepreneurship development, and job matching services.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant on several fronts. It offers practical, academic, and policy-relevant insights into youth employment and economic empowerment initiatives at the sub-national level. The findings of this study will help government and policymakers to better understand the gaps and opportunities in the EdoJobs Programme. It will also support evidence-based policy aimed at creating more inclusive and results-driven employment initiatives. The results from this study can be used to improve programme design, training curricula, and support services, while providing feedback on how well current interventions align with the realities and needs of beneficiaries. This means that young people can learn from the experiences of others who have participated in the programme. It will empower prospective participants to prepare better and make more informed decisions. The findings of this study can be significant to organizations

such as the World Bank, in terms of understanding local contexts, identifying impact opportunities, and channelling resources more efficiently to support job creation and entrepreneurship. The study is equally beneficial to future researchers who will find it a relevant research material for their study. It can as well serve as a reference material for analysing grassroots economic empowerment programmes in Nigeria and other developing economies.

1.7 Conceptualisation of terms

1. Youth Employment

This refers to the engagement of young people in productive work that provides income and contributes to economic growth. In this study, it refers to job opportunities available to youths in Benin City through the EdoJobs programme.

2. Economic Empowerment

The process of improving the economic status of individuals by increasing access to resources, income, and decision-making power. Here, it focuses on how EdoJobs enhances the financial independence of participants.

3. EdoJobs Programme

This is a youth employment and skills development initiative launched by the Edo State Government to reduce unemployment through training, entrepreneurship support, and job placement.

4. Impact Assessment

It is the systematic evaluation of the effects or outcomes of a programme or policy. In this study, it examines how EdoJobs has influenced youth employment and economic empowerment.

5. Unemployment

The condition of being without a paid job despite being willing and able to work. It represents one of the key challenges the EdoJobs programme seeks to address.

6. Entrepreneurship Development

This is the process of equipping individuals with skills and supporting them to start and manage their own businesses. This is one of the major components of the EdoJobs initiative.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE FRAMEWORK AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing studies, theories, and discussions relevant to youth employment initiatives and economic empowerment. It provides the foundation for understanding how youth employment programmes influence youth empowerment and economic outcomes and how it aligns with existing theories.

2.2 Concept of Youth Employment

Youth employment refers to the participation of young individuals in productive work that contributes to personal income and national development. According to the International Labour Organization (2020), youth employment is not limited to formal wage jobs; it includes self-employment, entrepreneurship, and informal sector participation. Effective youth employment ensures economic inclusion, social stability, and reduced dependency. In Nigeria, youth unemployment remains one of the leading economic problems. The National Bureau of Statistics (2023) reported that the youth unemployment rate exceeded 33 % in 2022, with many young graduates unable to find suitable employment. The causes of this situation include inadequate education and vocational training, a gap in academic skills and market demands, and the slow pace of industrial growth (Fajana, 2021).

However, youth employment policies often aim to equip young people with relevant skills, promote entrepreneurship, and facilitate job placement. Yet, many initiatives in Nigeria have

been criticised for poor implementation, limited coverage, and weak follow-up systems (Osagie & Adebayo, 2020). These shortcomings suggest that while training and empowerment programmes exist, their effectiveness depends on proper monitoring, funding, and linkage to real labour opportunities. Hence, youth employment contributes positively to economic growth by expanding the labour force and reducing poverty levels (Ajakaiye & Tella, 2019). Engaging young people in productive ventures have the ability to reduce social tension, crime, and migration pressures. Therefore, any initiative targeting youth employment like the EdoJobs Programme ought to focus on skill relevance, entrepreneurship support, and sustainable job creation.

2.2.1 Concept of Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment involves the enabling of individuals to gain control over their financial resources and participate maximally in economy activities. It goes beyond mere access to employment; it includes the ability to generate income, make independent economic decisions, and improve one's standard of living (Ajakaiye & Tella, 2019).

According to Olayemi (2019), empowerment entails equipping people with skills, capital, and opportunities that enhance their productivity and competitiveness for economic empowerment. When individuals, especially youths, are economically empowered, they become contributors to economic growth rather than dependents. Economic empowerment thus represents both a process and an outcome due to the process of gaining access to productive resources, combined with the outcome of achieving economic independence and stability. In the Nigerian context, economic empowerment programmes are typically designed to provide training, access to finance, and entrepreneurship support. Some examples include the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), N-Power, and YouWin programmes (Nwosu & Aniche, 2020).

However, empowerment have psychological and social dimensions to it. Zimmerman (1995) argues that empowerment improves self-efficacy, confidence, and decision-making abilities of an individual. Therefore, a well-structured empowerment initiative, such as EdoJobs, should not only train youth but also enhance their ability to apply knowledge, start businesses, and sustain livelihoods independently.

2.2.2 Concept of Employment Initiatives and Programmes

Employment initiatives are deliberate interventions by governments, NGOs, or private organisations to promote job creation, improve employability, and reduce poverty (Olayemi, 2019; Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2020). These Employment initiatives include vocational training, entrepreneurship development, job matching, and mentorship. According to Abiodun (2020), effective employment initiatives must address the root causes of unemployment, including lack of access to finance, and poor business support systems. This is focused on solving the impending dangers of unemployment to both individuals and the society.

Globally, countries have implemented different youth employment initiatives. In Ghana, for example, the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP) provides training and stipends to unemployed youth. In Kenya, the Youth Enterprise Development Fund offers grants and loans to young entrepreneurs (World Bank, 2021). The success of these programmes are dependent on transparency, accountability, and consistent policy. Whereas, in Nigeria, employment initiatives like N-Power and YouWin have made partial progress. A study conducted by Nwosu and Aniche (2020) found that the N-Power programme temporarily reduced unemployment and enhanced the skills of participants, but its sustainability remained uncertain. Similarly, the YouWin programme supported entrepreneurship but was criticised for poor follow-up and limited scalability and the success rate based on the outcome of those programmes were low (Okoro, 2018). Hence,

employment initiatives are most effective when they integrate skill development with job placement and business financing. This shows the need to combine technical training, internships, and entrepreneurship support to enhance employment opportunities and economic participation among youths.

2.2.3 The EdoJobs Programme

The EdoJobs Programme is a youth employment and empowerment initiative established by the Edo State Government in 2017. It was designed to tackle youth unemployment and enhance skill development across the state. The programme is managed by the Edo State Skills Development Agency (EdoJobs), which coordinates various training and job-matching activities (Edo State Government, 2022). EdoJobs focuses on four main pillars, including:

- Skills Development; providing vocational and technical training in areas like ICT, fashion design, catering, agriculture, and renewable energy.
- Entrepreneurship Support; offering grants, mentorship, and business incubation services for start-ups.
- Job Matching and Placement; connecting trained youths with employers through the EdoJobs platform.
- Public-Private Partnerships; collaborating with organisations like GIZ, Ford Foundation, and Microsoft to expand training opportunities.

According to the EdoJobs annual report (2022), over 200,000 youths have participated in its programmes since inception, with thousands reportedly gaining employment or starting small businesses. Omoruyi and Osemwengie (2021) observed that EdoJobs have contributed to skill acquisition and entrepreneurship among youths in Benin City. The relevance of EdoJobs to this

study tallies with the goal of linking skills acquisition and empowerment to measurable economic outcomes, fresh employment opportunities, income generation, and business creation.

2.2.4 Global Studies on Youth Employment Programmes

There are global studies which suggests that targeted employment initiatives aid in reducing unemployment when it is well designed. The ILO (2020) identified that youth empowerment programmes combining skills development with access to finance and mentorship yield better long-term results than training-only schemes. In Kenya, the Ajira Digital Programme improved digital employability by linking trained youth to online job markets. Whereas, in Ghana, integrated youth employment schemes led to improved entrepreneurship outcomes (World Bank, 2021).

However, many global initiatives face challenges such as limited funding and gender inequality. So, studies show that sustainable impact depends on continuous funding, private sector engagement, and effective evaluation frameworks (ILO, 2020).

2.2.5 National Studies on Youth Employment in Nigeria

Youth unemployment is a major socioeconomic problem in Nigeria, and several youth-employment programs have been initiated and implemented to address the challenge. While detailed analyses of the impacts of some of these programs have been conducted, empirical analysis of implementation challenges and of the influence of limited political inclusivity on distribution of program benefits is rare. There are several youth-employment programs in Nigeria that are challenged by factors such as lack of framework for proper governance and coordination, inadequate funding, lack of institutional implementation capacity, inadequate oversight of implementation, limited political inclusivity, lack of prioritization of vulnerable and marginalized

groups, and focus on stand-alone programs that are not tied to long-term development plans. These issues need to be addressed to ensure that youth-employment programs yield more positive outcomes and that youth unemployment is significantly reduced (Abiodun, 2020; Okon & Udu, 2018).

However, several researchers have analysed youth employment programmes in Nigeria. A study carried out by Abiodun (2020) reported that entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions improves self-employment tendencies among graduates. This guarantees that the students are given early introduction to these trainings, in order to prepare and connect them with job opportunities.

Moreover, some studies done by Nwosu and Aniche (2020) found that the N-Power Scheme could only temporarily reduce unemployment but not provide permanent job security. While Fajana (2021) examined the labour market institutions that were involved and concluded that weak industrial policies and inadequate training infrastructure are major hindrances to employment creation. Also, a study by Ajakaiye and Tella (2019) argued that sustainable youth employment requires consistent government support, functional vocational systems, and public-private collaboration. The general consensus of these studies is that youth employment initiatives must move beyond short-term interventions to ensure sustainable empowerment through skill relevance and innovation.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

2.3.1 Human Capital Theory (1964)

Human Capital Theory was developed by Gary Becker (Becker, 1964). He argued that investments in education, training, and health increase individual productivity and income. This

theory views skills acquisition as a form of capital that improves employability status and earning potential of individuals.

The theory explains the training component of youth empowerment initiatives to gain skills that make participants fit for the job market. However, for human capital investment to translate into jobs, the economy must provide high demand for those skills. When youths acquire skills, their productivity and income level tends to increase, leading to economic empowerment. Human capital investment through training programmes thus contributes to the employability of Edo youths.

2.3.2 Empowerment Theory

The Empowerment Theory have been linked to scholars Rappaport (1987) and Zimmerman (1995). It is based on the processes that enable individuals to control their lives and access resources. This theory lays emphasis on active participation, capacity building, and self-reliance of the people involved. This theory also suggests that participants who gained employability skills or start businesses are empowered to make economic decisions and improve their livelihoods (Ogbuagu & Ede, 2020). The Empowerment Theory implies that both the process of skill development and economic independence are outcomes of empowerment programmes.

Furthermore, Zimmerman (1995) developed the Empowerment Theory to explain how individuals gain control over their lives through participation and decision-making. Hence, empowerment is attained when individuals are given the resources and have the confidence to influence their economic conditions. Youth and economic empowerment programme applies this theory by promoting youth participation in skill development and entrepreneurship.

2.3.3 Theory of Change

The Theory of Change (UNDG, 2016) provides a logical explanation of how inputs lead to outcomes and impacts. It shows the connection between programme activities and desired results. For example, inputs such as funding, training, and mentorship can lead to outputs like skill acquisition and job placement, which in turn boosts economic empowerment. Also, they might not have the necessary skills and/or work experience, they might not have information about job opportunities and/or knowledge about the jobs search process, and they are less likely to be able to access capital to start a business (Robalino et. al. 2013). This review is designed to illuminate which type of intervention (or combination of interventions) is most successful in addressing these constraints. This framework helps assess whether design translate resources and activities to measurable impact on youth employment and economic empowerment (Ogundele, 2019).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In light of the above research methodology and theoretical framework deduced to embody the impact of youth employment initiatives and economic empowerment in Benin city, Edo state by EdoJobs Programme. This chapter highlights the techniques used in gathering information for this study. It describes the research design, sources of data, types of data, study population, sample size, sampling technique, the instruments used in data collection and the methods used in the analysis of data collected.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which is appropriate for assessing the opinions, experiences, and outcomes of participants who benefited from the EdoJobs Programme on youth employment and economic empowerment in Benin City. This research design was done via simple random sampling to collect data.

3.3 Population of the Study

The target population for this study were 120 beneficiaries of the EdoJobs Programme residing in Benin City, the capital of Edo State. These individuals have participated in at least one of the core intervention areas of EdoJobs, encompassing both male and female youths aged 18 to 35 years. The specific sub-groups within this population included: Participants in vocational training (e.g., tailoring, carpentry, mechanics), beneficiaries of ICT and digital skill development programmes (e.g., coding, digital marketing), youths who received entrepreneurship support and small business development training, and those involved in internship placements or apprenticeship schemes facilitated through EdoJobs.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 120 respondents was chosen based on the responses gathered from the study. A stratified random sampling technique was adopted. Additionally, participants were selected based on accessibility, willingness to respond, and verification of their involvement in EdoJobs.

3.5 Method of Data Collection

To enhance the comprehensiveness of the research, data were gathered from two primary sources:

1. Primary Data: This refers to data collected first-hand by the researcher using structured questionnaires. The questionnaire was designed to solicit information on the participants' demographics, training experience, post programme employment status, income changes, perceived empowerment, challenges faced, and suggestions for improvement.

2. Secondary Data: This includes existing literature, government reports, and policy documents relating to youth employment and the EdoJobs Programme. Sources used include: EdoJobs official publications and website content, academic journal articles on youth employment programmes in Nigeria, and reports by international organizations (e.g., World Bank, ILO).

3.6 Instrument for Data Collection

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed based on the research objectives. The questionnaire was divided into five sections, namely:

- **Section A (Demographic Information):** This section captured background data such as age, gender, education level, and employment status before the programme.
- **Section B (Programme Participation):** It assessed the type, duration, and delivery of training received under EdoJobs.
- **Section C (Post-Training Outcomes):** Questions here focused on employment status, business ownership, income changes, and perceived empowerment.
- **Section D (Challenges Faced):** This section examined difficulties encountered during and after programme participation.
- **Section E (Recommendations and Feedback):** Close-ended questions allowed participants to express their views on improving the programme.

The questionnaire included closed-ended questions (e.g., multiple choice, Likert scale) for ease of analysis. A pilot test was conducted on a small sample, and their feedback led to slight modifications to improve clarity and relevance.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

Data obtained from the survey were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages. These were presented in tables to aid comprehension.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the data collected from respondents who participated in the EdoJobs Programme in Benin City. The data were gathered through structured questionnaires designed to assess how well the programme has contributed to youth employment and economic empowerment in Edo State. The focus of this study is to bridge the gap between policy and practical outcomes by comparing real-life experiences of beneficiaries with the objectives and framework of the EdoJobs initiative.

The analysis is organized thematically in line with the study's research objectives and questions. It examines demographic characteristics, programme implementation, employment status, economic empowerment, and challenges encountered by beneficiaries. Statistical Package for Social Sciences, SPSS 21.0 was used for the analysis. There are also tabular presentations of data in frequency counts and percentages.

4.2 Data Presentation

Table 1: Gender Distribution

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	60	50	50	50
Female	60	50	50	100
Total	120	100	100	

Table 1 shows the gender distribution of respondents in this study is equal. Out of 120 participants, 60 are male and 60 are female, each representing 50 % of the total sample size. This equal representation indicates that both men and women are equally involved in or affected by the EdoJobs Programme in Benin City. It also suggests that the assessment of youth employment initiatives and economic empowerment through EdoJobs reflects balanced perspectives from both genders. This balance is important for understanding how the programme impacts male and female youths in terms of access to job opportunities, skill development, and economic outcomes.

Table 2: Age Distribution

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-24 years	28	23.3	23.3	23.3
25-30 years	52	43.4	43.4	66.7
31-35 years	40	33.3	33.3	100
Total	120	100	100	

Table 2 reveals that most respondents in the study are between 25 and 30 years old, accounting for 43.4 % of the total sample. Those aged 31 to 35 years make up 33.3 %, while respondents aged 18 to 24 years represent 23.3 % of the population studied. This age distribution indicates that the EdoJobs Programme attracts individuals in their mid to late twenties, a stage for career

development and entry into stable employment. Moreover, the presence of respondents across the 18–35 age range aligns with the youth demographic targeted by the programme. It also suggests that the EdoJobs initiative reaches the core youth population in Benin City, promoting economic empowerment among young adults who are transitioning into the workforce.

Table 3: Educational Level

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SSCE	10	8.3	8.3	8.3
ND/NCE	25	20.8	20.8	29.1
HND/B.Sc	65	54.2	54.2	83.3
Postgraduate	20	16.7	16.7	100
Total	120	100	100	

Table 3 shows that most respondents hold tertiary qualifications. About 54.2 % possess HND or B.Sc degrees, 20.8 % have ND or NCE, 16.7 % have postgraduate qualifications, while only 8.3 % completed SSCE. This suggests that the EdoJobs Programme in Benin City mainly engages participants with higher educational background, appealing more to educated youths seeking to apply or improve their skills for better employment and economic opportunities. The low participation of SSCE holders is indicative of limited inclusion of less-educated youths due to the potential gap in outreach or accessibility to make the programme more inclusive.

Table 4: Area of training

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
ICT	35	29.2	29.2	29.2
Vocational	40	33.3	33.3	62.5
Entrepreneurship	30	25.0	25.0	87.5
Others	15	12.5	12.5	100
Total	120	100	100	

The data from Table 4 shows that vocational training recorded the highest participation with 33.3 % of respondents, followed by ICT training with 29.2 %, entrepreneurship training with 25 %, and other forms of training with 12.5 %. This means that the EdoJobs Programme in Benin City focuses strongly on practical and technical skill development, especially in vocational and ICT areas. These fields are essential for improving employability and promoting self-reliance among youths. The significant share of entrepreneurship training also encourages self-employment and small business creation. Overall, the EdoJob programme is targeted at improving skills that can enhance youth economic empowerment and reduce unemployment in Edo State.

Table 5: The programme was well organised

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	45	37.5	37.5	37.5
Agree	55	45.8	45.8	83.3
Disagree	15	12.5	12.5	95.8
Strongly Disagree	5	4.2	4.2	100

Total	120	100	100	
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Table 5 reveals that most respondents believe the EdoJobs Programme was well organised, where about 45.8 % agreed and 37.5 % strongly agreed, giving a combined 83.3 % positive response. Only 12.5 % disagreed and 4.2 % strongly disagreed. This indicates that the majority of participants were satisfied with the structure and management of the EdoJobs Programme in Benin City. The high level of agreement suggests effective planning, coordination, and delivery of activities, which contributed to favourable training experiences and outcomes. As a matter of fact, well-organised programmes are more likely to enhance participant engagement and improve the impact of youth employment and empowerment initiatives in Edo State.

Table 6: The training content was relevant

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	50	41.7	41.7	41.7
Agree	60	50.0	50.0	91.7
Disagree	7	5.8	5.8	97.5
Strongly Disagree	3	2.5	2.5	100
Total	120	100	100	

Table 6 displays the analytical overview where most respondents agreed that the training content of the EdoJobs Programme was relevant. Here, half of the respondents (50 %) agreed to this claim, while 41.7 % strongly agreed, giving a combined 91.7 % positive response. Only 5.8 % disagreed and 2.5 % strongly disagreed. This means that participants found the training content to have aligned with their needs and the demands of the job market. The high level of agreement

suggests that the EdoJobs Programme provided practical and applicable knowledge that supports youth employability and economic empowerment in Benin City. This relevance likely enhanced skills and readiness of participants for both self-employment and formal job opportunities.

Table 7: The facilitators were knowledgeable

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	48	40.0	40.0	40.0
Agree	58	48.3	48.3	88.3
Disagree	10	8.3	8.3	96.6
Strongly Disagree	4	3.4	3.4	100
Total	120	100	100	

Table 7 shows that most respondents agreed that the facilitators of the EdoJobs Programme were knowledgeable. About 48.3 % agreed and 40 % strongly agreed, giving a combined 88.3 % positive response. Where only 8.3 % disagreed and the other 3.4 % strongly disagreed. This signifies that participants were satisfied with the competence and expertise of the facilitators. Meanwhile, the increased approval rate suggests that the facilitators had the required knowledge and teaching skills to deliver the training effectively. This likely improved learning experiences and contributed to the overall success of the EdoJobs Programme in promoting youth employment and economic empowerment in Benin City.

Table 8: There was post-training support

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	20	16.7	16.7	16.7
Agree	30	25.0	25.0	41.7

Disagree	40	33.3	33.3	75.0
Strongly Disagree	30	25.0	25.0	100
Total	120	100	100	

Table 8 shows only 25 % agreed and 16.7 % of respondents strongly agreed that there was post-training support under the EdoJobs Programme. In contrast, 33.3 % disagreed and 25 % strongly disagreed, totalling 58.3 % negative responses to this claim. This meant that many participants felt post-training support was inadequate or lacking. This is as a result of the absence of strong follow-up measures set in place. For youth employment initiatives like EdoJobs to achieve sustained economic empowerment, post-training assistance is essential to help participants apply their skills and secure meaningful income opportunities in Benin City.

Table 9: Employment status

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Fully employed	45	37.5	37.5	37.5
Partially employed	30	25.0	25.0	62.5
Still unemployed	45	37.5	37.5	100
Total	120	100	100	

The data in Table 9 reveals that 37.5 % of respondents were fully employed, 25 % were partially employed, and 37.5 % remained unemployed after participating in the EdoJobs Programme. This tells us that while the programme helped a portion of participants secure full or partial employment, a significant number were still left without jobs. The equal proportion of employed and unemployed respondents suggests that the programme has had a moderate impact on job

creation in Benin City. Also, these results point to some progress in promoting youth employment and economic empowerment while also highlighting the need for stronger job placement support, partnerships with employers, and follow-up interventions to reduce post-training unemployment issues among participants.

Table 10: Useful skills from the programme were gained

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	55	45.8	45.8	45.8
Agree	50	41.7	41.7	87.5
Disagree	10	8.3	8.3	95.8
Strongly Disagree	5	4.2	4.2	100
Total	120	100	100	

Table 10 shows that most respondents agreed that they gained useful skills from the EdoJobs Programme. About 41.7 % agreed and 45.8 % strongly agreed, giving a combined 87.5 % positive response. Whereas, only 8.3% disagreed and 4.2% strongly disagreed. This indicates that the EdoJobs programme equipped participants with practical and relevant skills. This outcome supports the goal of the EdoJobs initiative in Benin City, which is to enhance youth employment and economic empowerment through skill acquisition and development.

Table 11: The programme improved income levels

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	35	29.2	29.2	29.2
Agree	40	33.3	33.3	62.5
Disagree	25	20.8	20.8	83.3

Strongly Disagree	20	16.7	16.7	100
Total	120	100	100	

Table 11 reveals that 33.3 % of respondents agreed and 29.2 % strongly agreed that the EdoJobs Programme improved their income levels, giving a combined 62.5 % positive response. However, 20.8 % disagreed and 16.7 % strongly disagreed, giving a total of 37.5 % negative responses. This indicates that while a majority of participants experienced some income improvement after the programme, a significant portion did not. The results suggest that the EdoJobs Programme has contributed to enhancing economic empowerment for many youths in Benin City, but the impact on income levels is uneven. Hence, strengthening post-training support, access to finance, and job placement opportunities could help more participants translate their skills into sustained income growth and wealth creation.

Table 12: More confidence about the future

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	40	33.3	33.3	33.3
Agree	55	45.8	45.8	79.1
Disagree	15	12.5	12.5	91.6
Strongly Disagree	10	8.4	8.4	100

Table 12 shows that most respondents felt more confident about their future after participating in the EdoJobs Programme. About 45.8 % agreed and 33.3 % strongly agreed, giving a combined 79.1 % positive response. Only 12.5 % disagreed and 8.4 % strongly disagreed. This shows that

the EdoJobs Programme had a positive psychological and motivational impact on participants. The majority felt more prepared and optimistic about their career and economic prospects.

Table 13: Was able to start a business after training

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	25	20.8	20.8	20.8
Agree	35	29.2	29.2	50.0
Disagree	35	29.2	29.2	79.2
Strongly Disagree	25	20.8	20.8	100
Total	120	100	100	

Table 13 shows that 29.2 % of respondents agreed and 20.8 % strongly agreed that they were able to start a business after the EdoJobs training, giving a combined 50 % positive response. The remaining 50 % either disagreed (29.2 %) or strongly disagreed (20.8 %). The data from this study indicated that while half of the participants successfully applied their training to start businesses, the other half faced challenges in doing so. The result suggests that the EdoJobs Programme has had a moderate impact on promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment among youths in Benin City. However, limited access to start-up capital, business mentorship, or market opportunities remain, preventing many from applying their skills into business ventures. Strengthening these areas could improve the long-term impact on youth economic empowerment.

Table 14: Challenges Faced by participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Lack of start-up capital	50	41.7	41.7	41.7

No job placement after training	25	20.8	20.8	62.5
Insufficient training duration	30	25.0	25.0	87.5
Poor awareness	15	12.5	12.5	100
Total	120	100	100	

Table 14 shows that the major challenge faced by participants in the EdoJobs Programme was due to lack of start-up capital, reported by (41.7 %), followed by insufficient training duration (25 %), no job placement after training (20.8 %), and poor awareness of the programme (12.5 %). This study data reveals that financial constraints remain a major barrier to achieving the sinesses. The absence of job placement opportunities and limited training duration further reduced the impact of this programme on youth employment and economic empowerment in Benin City. There is the need to address these challenges by improving access to funding and post-training support.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The study examined “Youth employment initiatives and economic empowerment in Edo State: An Impact Assessment of the EdoJobs Programme in Benin City”. This study provide insights into the extent of its impact, the skills gained by participants, and the challenges affecting its overall success. Having subjected the data collected from the respondents to statistical package for social science (SPSS), the outcome of the research revealed the following findings.

Firstly, the EdoJobs initiative has contributed to reducing youth unemployment in Benin City, though the extent of its impact remains moderate. This shows that while the programme has

created some employment opportunities, a considerable proportion of beneficiaries still struggle to secure jobs. However, Edo State had earlier reported a drop in unemployment rates from about 35 % to 19 % between 2016 and 2020, due to the EdoJobs programme (World Bank, 2020; TheCable, 2021).

Also, the findings indicate that 62.5 % of respondents experienced improved income levels, following their participation in the EdoJobs programme. This suggests that the initiative contributed to raising the earning potential of a significant portion of its participants. The improvement aligns with the programme's goal of promoting economic self-sufficiency through skill acquisition. However, 37.5 % of respondents reported that there was no improvement in income, implying that some beneficiaries could not convert their training experience into sustainable income sources. This supports earlier studies that found mixed income outcomes for Nigerian youth employment initiatives (Adewuyi & Afolabi, 2020).

Again, the EdoJobs Programme provided training in various fields such as ICT, vocational skills, agribusiness, and entrepreneurship (Edo State Government, 2022). The data show that 87.5 % of respondents agreed that they gained useful skills throughout the training process, confirming its success in skill acquisition. Meanwhile, vocational and ICT trainings recorded the highest participation, indicating that EdoJobs aligns with current labour market demands. Entrepreneurial skills were also enhanced, with 50 % of participants reporting that they were able to start their own businesses. Similarly, some previous studies show that skill-based interventions enhance youth employability and entrepreneurship in Nigeria (Olayemi, 2020). Nonetheless, the inability of the remaining 50 % to start businesses reveals the need for financial support to apply skills into enterprise development.

Furthermore, the training component of the programme was proven effective, with respondents (91.7%) who agreed that the training content was relevant, and 88.3 % agreed that facilitators were knowledgeable. This demonstrates that the training delivery and curriculum were strong. However, only 41.7 % of respondents believed there was adequate post-training support, indicating a gap in follow-up and sustainability. The employment status data also reveal that while many participants gained temporary jobs, fewer achieved long-term employment. This aparticipantthe study done by Okojie (2021), who observed that youth training programmes in Nigeria often succeed in skill delivery but fall short in ensuring lasting job placement. Therefore, while EdoJobs effectively imparts knowledge, it needs stronger partnerships with private employers to ensure sustainable employment opportunities.

Moreover, there were participants who identified several challenges affecting the success of the EdoJobs Programme. The main issue mentioned was the lack of start-up capital (41.7 %), followed by insufficient training duration (25 %), lack of job placement after training (20.8 %), and poor programme awareness among individuals (12.5 %). These constraints align with broader issues in youth employment policies across Nigeria, where limited funding, inadequate monitoring, and weak institutional frameworks often hinder long-term success (Ire Journals, 2022). The absence of consistent post-training support, especially access to credit and business mentorship, reduces the effectiveness of the programme. Additionally, limited rural outreach and mismatched skills training reduce the potential impact on the youth populations (Adewuyi & Afolabi, 2020).

In conclusion, the EdoJobs Programme has achieved progress in skill development, income improvement, and employment creation in Benin City, with most participants acknowledging that they gained relevant skills and felt more confident about their future prospects. However,

challenges such as lack of start-up capital, limited job placements, and weak post-training follow-up constrained its overall success. So, in order to strengthen its impact, EdoJobs should prioritise access to funding, mentorship, and partnerships with industries to provide continuous employment opportunities. With such measures set in place, the EdoJobs Programme can better achieve its goal of sustainable youth employment and economic empowerment in Edo State.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study examined the impact of youth employment initiatives on economic empowerment in Edo State, focusing on the beneficiaries of EdoJobs Programme in Benin City. It was driven by the urgent need to evaluate whether state-led interventions such as EdoJobs are genuinely translating into sustainable employment and improved livelihoods for the youths.

From the analysis of data presented in Chapter Four, several findings emerged where respondents described EdoJobs as well-organized and professionally executed. The training content was relevant, and facilitators were perceived as knowledgeable and competent. According to Ukinebo Dare (2020), the Managing Director of EdoJobs, the programme's focus on practical and market-driven training modules was designed to "equip young people with skills that employers value

and entrepreneurs need.” However, while implementation was strong in structure, it was weak in post-training support such as mentorship, employment linkage, and financial backing.

Although some beneficiaries secured employment or started small businesses, many remained unemployed. Hence, the lack of structured job placement services was identified as a major gap. This reflects Obaseki’s (2021) admission that “training is only one step, the next challenge is ensuring that skills translate into job opportunities.” The limited absorption of graduates into the workforce underscores the need for stronger private sector collaboration. Also, the majority of respondents acknowledged improvements in technical competence, confidence, and self-reliance. Yet, fewer people experienced measurable increases in income or sustained business growth. According to Okojie (2023), true empowerment comes when beneficiaries can convert training into income streams of income. Thus, the contribution of EdoJobs Programme to youth employment and economic empowerment remains constrained by limited access to finance and business incubation support.

Meanwhile, some respondents highlighted persistent challenges such as lack of access to startup capital or microcredit facilities, absence of job placement systems, short training durations, poor rural awareness, and limited mentorship after training. These barriers keep reducing the long-term economic impact and development, and highlights that while EdoJobs is a well-structured and visionary initiative, it requires strategic reforms to achieve full effectiveness and sustainability.

5.2 Conclusion

The EdoJobs Programme stands as a remarkable state-led youth empowerment in Nigeria launched by Governor Godwin Obaseki in 2017. It was conceived as a major public policy tool for job creation through skills development, entrepreneurship training, and industrial partnerships.

The findings of this research shows that the initiative has contributed positively to youth engagement and skills acquisition.

However, the continued unemployment of trained youths highlights the need for EdoJobs to move beyond training and integrate a comprehensive ecosystem of mentorship, financing, and monitoring. In conclusion, EdoJobs has built a solid foundation, but the journey toward sustainable youth empowerment requires deepened structure, consistent funding, and institutionalized partnerships.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the empirical findings and analysis, the following recommendations were made:

1. Establishment of post-training mentorship and follow-up systems.
2. Provision of access to start-up capital.
3. Creation of a centralized job-matching and internship platform.
4. Expansion of awareness and outreach campaigns in various communities.
5. Thoroughly reviewed and extended training duration.
6. Develop a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to enhance transparency and continuous improvement.
7. Strengthen partnerships with development agencies like the World Bank for long-term impact.

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APPENDIX

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Gender: Male Female

2. Age: 18–24 25–30 31–35

3. Educational Qualification: SSCE ND/NCE HND/B.Sc Postgraduate

4. Marital Status: Single Married Divorced Widowed

5. Employment Status before EdoJobs Participation: Employed Unemployed Self-employed

6. Residence: Oredo Egor Ikpoba–Okha Other (please specify) _____

SECTION B: PARTICIPATION IN THE EDOJOBS PROGRAMME

7. Which EdoJobs training area did you participate in? Vocational Skills ICT / Digital Skills Entrepreneurship Development Internship / Apprenticeship Others

8. Duration of training: Less than 1 month 1–3 months 4–6 months Above 6 months

9. How did you learn about EdoJobs? Radio/TV Social Media Friends/Family

Government Office Others

10. Rate the organization of the EdoJobs Programme: Excellent Good Fair Poor

11. How would you rate the quality of training materials and facilities provided? Excellent

Good Fair Poor

12. Were the facilitators knowledgeable and supportive? Yes No Not sure

SECTION C: POST-TRAINING OUTCOMES

13. What is your current employment status? Fully employed Partially employed Self-employed Unemployed

14. Has your income improved since you completed the EdoJobs Programme? Significantly improved Slightly improved No change Decreased

15. Did EdoJobs help you secure a job, internship, or start a business? Yes No Partially

16. Do you feel more confident about your career or business prospects after EdoJobs? Yes No Not sure

17. In your opinion, has the EdoJobs Programme improved your overall quality of life? Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

SECTION D: CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

18. What major challenges did you face during or after the EdoJobs Programme? (Tick all that apply)

Lack of start-up capital

- Short duration of training
- Inadequate post-training support or mentorship
- Lack of job opportunities
- Poor awareness of the programme
- Others (please specify) _____

19. Were there follow-up or mentorship opportunities after your training? Yes No Not sure

20. If no, how did the absence of follow-up affect your progress?

SECTION E: SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

21. What areas do you think EdoJobs should improve on? Provision of start-up grants/loans Better mentorship and follow-up Job placement and internship linkages Increased awareness in rural communities Extended training duration

22. In your opinion, how effective is the EdoJobs Programme in reducing youth unemployment in Edo State? Very effective Effective Fairly effective Not effective

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION. Your responses will contribute to improving youth employment initiatives in Edo State.