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## Impact of Youth Empowerment Scheme on Poverty Alleviation in Federal Capital Territory (ABUJA), Nigeria

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**Abstract:** Youth empowerment schemes play a crucial role in poverty alleviation in Nigeria by providing young people with the skills, resources, and opportunities necessary to improve their socio-economic conditions. These programs typically focus on education, vocational training, entrepreneurship, and access to financial services. By equipping the youth with the tools to become self-sufficient and economically productive, these schemes help reduce unemployment and underemployment, which are significant contributors to poverty. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the impact of the youth empowerment scheme on poverty alleviation in FCT, Abuja, Nigeria, using KEKE NAPEEP as a case study. The paper's objective is to investigate the impact of KEKE NAPEEP scheme on drivers' financial situation, standard of living, and employment opportunities in FCT, Abuja. It aims to assess the scheme's effectiveness in these critical areas. We used Spearman's rank correlation coefficient as the estimation technique. The findings indicate that KEKE NAPEEP scheme has significantly enhanced drivers' financial situations, improved their standard of living, and provided better employment opportunities in FCT, Abuja. The paper concludes that the KEKE NAPEEP scheme in FCT Abuja exemplifies effective youth empowerment by significantly improving drivers' financial stability, quality of life, and employment opportunities. It reduces poverty by providing financial aid and

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vocational training, demonstrating the potential of targeted programs for broader economic and social benefits. To enhance the KEKE NAPEEP scheme's impact, the government should expand it nationwide, invest in comprehensive training, and offer incentives for vehicle upgrades. Regular monitoring and improved access to financial services will also support drivers' financial stability and living standards.

**Keywords:** Youth empowerment schemes, Poverty alleviation, standard of living, Skills and entrepreneurship

## Introduction

The KEKE NAPEEP scheme has been instrumental in advancing youth empowerment in Abuja, offering accessible and stable employment to young people. As a strategic response to combat unemployment, this initiative has facilitated self-employment by providing young people with an accessible entry point into the transportation sector. By doing so, it has enabled many participants to secure a steady income, which has bolstered their financial independence and economic stability (Adewale & Ojo, 2020).

Additionally, the program supports talent development among youth, equipping participants with valuable business and management skills as they operate their KEKE NAPEEP vehicles. These skills hold substantial value, not only in their current roles but also in preparing them for potential future entrepreneurial ventures, thereby nurturing a culture of self-reliance and innovation (Eze, 2021). The scheme's presence in Abuja has contributed to significant

socioeconomic progress, as financially empowered young individuals are able to support their families and communities, ultimately fostering economic growth and reducing poverty (Olatunji & Hassan, 2019).

The visibility of KEKE NAPEEP operations within public spaces showcases the impact of youth-led initiatives and highlights the effectiveness of targeted empowerment programs in addressing unemployment. These programs not only reduce crime but also mitigate social unrest related to youth joblessness (Ibrahim & Usman, 2022). The program's success underscores the importance of government-supported initiatives that are tailored to youth needs, ensuring they have the resources and opportunities necessary to thrive in today's competitive economy. Consequently, the KEKE NAPEEP project has emerged as a vital tool for youth empowerment in Abuja, significantly enhancing participants' lives and contributing to the city's

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economic and social advancement (Mohammed & Aliyu, 2023).

While extensive research has been conducted on various poverty alleviation programs in Nigeria, there remains a notable gap in studies specifically analyzing the effectiveness of the KEKE NAPEP tricycle initiative in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. Previous studies have primarily focused on general outcomes of youth empowerment initiatives across Nigeria, often overlooking the unique socioeconomic landscape of the FCT. Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical research on the long-term sustainability of the KEKE NAPEP scheme and its integration with other poverty reduction projects. Additionally, the impact of implementation challenges, such as corruption and unequal resource distribution, on the scheme's effectiveness in Abuja has not been adequately addressed.

Conducting research on this topic is essential, as it can provide critical insights into enhancing youth empowerment strategies by understanding the specific challenges and outcomes of the KEKE NAPEP initiative in Abuja. Addressing youth poverty in Abuja is particularly vital for national stability and development, given its role as Nigeria's capital. This research has the potential to identify gaps in policy implementation and offer targeted

recommendations to improve the efficiency of poverty reduction efforts. By focusing on the FCT, this study can contribute to the formulation of specialized strategies that take into account the unique needs and conditions of young people in this region, thereby enhancing poverty alleviation and economic empowerment efforts across Nigeria.

Consequently, this paper aims to evaluate the impact of the KEKE NAPEEP scheme on drivers' financial conditions, quality of life, and employment opportunities within the FCT, Abuja, with the goal of assessing the program's effectiveness in these key areas.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Conceptual Review on Youth Empowerment Scheme on Poverty Alleviation

Odeyemi (2021) describes youth empowerment as equipping young people with the skills, resources, and opportunities necessary to enhance their involvement in social, economic, and political activities. Similarly, Adebayo (2022) suggests that youth empowerment involves providing young individuals with essential tools, training, and support, enabling them to make informed decisions and positively impact their communities and society. Ibrahim (2023) views youth empowerment as a focused investment in young people's

development through education, skill-building, and resource access, all of which facilitate active socio-economic and political participation. Oluwaseun (2023) defines it as the encouragement and support of young individuals to acquire skills, knowledge, and confidence to shape their lives fully. In alignment, Adedokun and Akinyele (2023) highlight youth empowerment as creating a conducive environment where young people can attain education, skills, and opportunities necessary for contributing to their personal and community development, while Musa (2023) views it as a structured approach for equipping youth to realize their potential and support societal progress.

In terms of poverty alleviation, Akinola (2021) describes it as implementing strategies that address basic needs like food, shelter, education, and healthcare to reduce poverty levels in communities. Eze and Okwuosa (2022) emphasize poverty alleviation as a systematic effort to mitigate poverty through targeted programs that uplift economic, social, and health conditions for vulnerable groups. Abubakar (2022) interprets poverty alleviation as enhancing living standards by tackling root causes of poverty, including low income, inadequate education, and limited healthcare access. Olatunji (2023) further expands on this, viewing it as

a multi-faceted approach to poverty reduction through policies that promote income growth, employment, and access to essentials. Ibrahim and Musa (2023) describe poverty alleviation as empowering individuals with resources, skills, and opportunities to achieve economic independence, while Ojo (2023) underscores it as addressing immediate and long-term needs, such as food, shelter, education, and job creation. Adeyemi and Oladele (2023) characterize poverty alleviation as improving the quality of life for underprivileged groups by providing tools and opportunities to break the poverty cycle and attain financial stability.

## **2.1. Theoretical Review**

### **2.2.1. Theories of Youth Empowerment Scheme on Poverty Alleviation**

The theories of youth empowerment are discussed as follows:

The Positive Youth Development (PYD) Theory, developed by Richard Lerner and his colleagues in the early 2000s, focuses on empowering young people by recognizing and building on their strengths rather than simply addressing their challenges. The theory promotes the creation of supportive environments that foster youth participation in positive activities, leadership, and skill-building. Research shows that when

young individuals are given opportunities to engage in constructive activities with the guidance of caring adults, they are more likely to thrive and make meaningful contributions to society (Lerner et al., 2005).

Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, introduced in 1979, provides a framework for understanding how various environmental factors influence human development. Bronfenbrenner proposed that development is shaped by multiple layers of a person's environment, including immediate settings like family and school, as well as broader influences such as culture, society, and economic conditions. This theory underscores the need for youth empowerment programs to adopt a holistic approach, considering various levels of influence, from individual and family dynamics to larger social and policy structures (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Both theories emphasize the importance of an integrated approach to youth development, recognizing that a supportive and well-rounded environment is crucial for fostering positive growth and long-term success.

However, the theories of poverty are discussed as follows:

In the 1990s, Amartya Sen introduced the Capability Approach, which shifted the focus of poverty reduction

from income alone to enhancing individuals' abilities to live fulfilling lives. This approach emphasizes improving access to essential resources such as education and healthcare, allowing individuals to reach their full potential and improve their quality of life. Unlike the asset-based approach, which was developed by Michael Sherraden in the early 2000s, the Capability Approach prioritizes expanding people's capacity to make choices that improve their overall well-being, rather than focusing on increasing financial or social assets alone.

Sen's Capability Approach is closely linked to both youth empowerment and poverty alleviation. By emphasizing the development of skills and increasing access to resources like education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, this approach aims to empower individuals—particularly young people—to break free from poverty and improve their life outcomes. It aligns with youth empowerment by underscoring the importance of providing young people with the tools and opportunities they need to thrive and contribute meaningfully to society. Through this empowerment, the approach seeks to enable young people to overcome barriers and lead fulfilling lives, directly contributing to long-term poverty reduction.

### 2.3. Empirical Review

In Abuja, Nigeria, a number of studies have explored the impact of various youth empowerment initiatives on poverty alleviation. Ademola (2023) examined the effect of youth empowerment programs, using a multiple regression model. The findings revealed a positive but statistically insignificant impact, suggesting that the programs need improved targeting and execution. Similarly, Okeke (2022) analyzed the role of skills acquisition programs in poverty reduction, using logistic regression, and found that acquiring skills significantly reduced poverty levels among youth participants.

Bello (2022) evaluated the National Social Investment Program (NSIP) in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), using propensity score matching (PSM). The study concluded that the program had a substantial positive impact on poverty reduction among its beneficiaries. In another study, Adebayo (2021) applied a difference-in-differences (DID) approach to assess the Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), finding that participants experienced a notable reduction in poverty compared to non-participants.

Ogunleye (2021) focused on the influence of entrepreneurship training, using structural equation modeling (SEM). His study found that entrepreneurship training played a significant role in poverty alleviation. Ibrahim (2020), utilizing a probit

regression model, similarly identified a significant relationship between youth empowerment and poverty reduction in rural areas of Abuja.

Additional studies by Umeh (2020) and Olatunji (2020) examined government intervention initiatives and youth empowerment programs, respectively. Umeh's panel data regression analysis showed a moderate effect on poverty reduction, while Olatunji's ordinary least squares (OLS) regression found a statistically significant but modest influence on urban poverty alleviation. Nwachukwu (2019), in his study on vocational training programs, used a logit regression model and found that vocational training significantly helped reduce poverty among its participants. Other notable studies include Adesanya (2019), who used a Tobit regression model to assess agricultural empowerment programs, concluding that such initiatives significantly decreased poverty. Eze (2018) found that microcredit initiatives played a crucial role in alleviating poverty using multiple regression analysis. In similar research, Bamidele (2018) applied panel data analysis and determined that empowerment programs had a significant, sector-dependent effect on poverty reduction.

Ojo (2018) studied the impact of youth entrepreneurship on poverty alleviation using a fixed-effects

model, concluding that youth entrepreneurship substantially reduces poverty. Akinyemi (2017), in his multinomial logit model, found that ICT training significantly contributes to poverty reduction. Lastly, Ezeocha (2017) utilized quantile regression to assess the effectiveness of government initiatives, revealing that these programs were particularly effective in reducing poverty among disadvantaged youth in Abuja.

These studies collectively underscore the varied approaches and positive outcomes of youth empowerment programs on poverty alleviation in Nigeria, though they also point to the need for more precise targeting and more tailored interventions.

### 3.0. Research Methodology

This study employs a descriptive survey research design. Data were collected from a random sample of youth drivers operating KEKE NAPEEP (three-wheeled taxis) who had registered with the six area development councils in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. These councils include Abaji (167 drivers), Bwari (108 drivers), Gwagwalada (121 drivers), Kuje (170 drivers), Kwali (208 drivers), and the Abuja Municipal Area Council (338 drivers). In total, 1,112 small and medium-sized enterprises were registered across these councils.

Therefore, the sample size for the study is determined by using the Taro Yamane's formula as below:-

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where

n = desired sample size

N= Population size

e = maximum acceptable value of error

1 = a theoretical constant

n (no of respondents)

$$= \frac{1112}{1 + 1112 \times (0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{1112}{1113 \times 0.0025}$$

$$= \frac{1112}{2.7825} = 399.6 = 400$$

The sample size for this paper was determined using the Taro Yamane sample size formula, resulting in a selection of 400 youth KEKE NAPEEP drivers across the six area councils in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The distribution of respondents is as follows: Abaji Area Council - 66, Bwari Area Council - 66, Gwagwalada Area Council - 66, Kuje Area Council - 66, Kwali Area Council - 66, and Abuja Municipal Area Council - 70. The higher number of respondents in the Abuja Municipal Area Council was justified by its larger population of youth KEKE

NAPEEP drivers compared to other councils.

For data analysis, Spearman’s Rank Correlation Coefficient was applied using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The formula for Spearman’s Rank Correlation Coefficient is as follows:

$$R = 1 - \frac{6\sum d^2}{n^2(n-1)}$$

Where d= the difference between the ranks of each pair.

n = Number of paired observations

Re spo nse s	Fre que ncy	Cu mu lati ve Fre que ncy	Perce ntage	R es po nse s	Fr eq ue ncy	Cu mu lati ve Fre qu en cy	Per ce nta ge
Ma le	324 .00	324.00	83.51	Si ng le	342.00	342.00	88.14
Fe ma le	64.00	388.00	16.49	M ar ried	46.00	388.00	11.86
Tot al	388.00		100.00		388.00		100.00

4.1. Data Presentation and Analysis of Questionnaire

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4.1.1. Response Rate

Table 4.1 displays the response rate of the questionnaire. Of the 400 targeted respondents, 388 filled out the questionnaire, which served as the data used for analysis.

Table 4.1: Response Rate for the Study

Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Returned	% of Questionnaires Returned
400	388	97

Source: Primary Data, SPSS V26, 2023.

Out of the 400 questionnaires that were distributed, 97 were completed and returned. Mugenda and Mugenda (2000) substantiated the 388 return rate, which accounts for 97%, by authorizing it for analysis at 50%, 60%, and 70%.

SECTION A (BIO-DATA OF RESPONDENTS)

Sex Distribution



Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, 2024

According to the results shown above, males account for 83.51 percent of all respondents, while females account for 16.49 percent of the entire sample population. As a result of the aforesaid data, we may conclude that there are significantly more male respondents in the research study. Furthermore, it was discovered from the above-mentioned results that 88.14 percent of the total respondents are single, whereas 11.86 percent of the entire sample is married. Thus, we can deduce that there are more single respondents in the survey than there are single participants.

TABLE 2  
AGE DISTRIBUTION

Respon ses	Frequen cy	Cumulat ive Frequen cy	Percenta ge
Below 25 years	128.00	128.00	32.99
Betwee n 25-35 years	210.00	338.00	54.12
Betwee n 36-45 years	28.00	366.00	07.22
46 and above	22.00	388.0	05.67
Total	388.00		100.0

Source: Researcher’s Field survey, 2024

According to the data in the table above, 128 respondents are under the age of 25 years, accounting for 32.99 percent of the total respondents, while 210 respondents are between the ages

of 25 and 35 years, accounting for 54.12 percent of the total respondents. On the other hand, 28 respondents are between the ages of 36 and 45, accounting for 7.22 percent of the total respondents, while 22 respondents are between the ages of 46 and above, accounting for 5.67 percent of the total respondents. As a result of the foregoing analysis, we can conclude that respondents between the ages of 25 and 35 are overrepresented in the research study.

TABLE 3  
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION  
DISTRIBUTION

Respons es	Freque ncy	Cumulat ive Frequen cy	Percent age
WAEC	148.00	148.00	38..14
NCE/O ND	164.00	312.00	42.27
HND/B. SC	62.00	374.00	15.98
MBA	14.00	388.00	03.61
TOTAL	388.00		100.00

Source: Researcher’s Field survey, 2024

According to the data in the table above, 38.14 percent of the total respondents hold a qualification from the West African Examination Council (WAEC), whereas 42.27 percent of the total respondents hold a National College of Education/Ordinary National Diploma (NCE/OND) qualification. As a result, 15.98 percent of the total respondents hold a Higher National Diploma/ Bachelor of Science (HND/B.SC) qualification, whereas

3.6 percent hold a Master's degree (MBA), we can conclude that respondents with National College of Education/Ordinary National Diploma (NCE/OND) qualification are more.

5 years of driving KEKE NAPEEP, according to the survey results. We can conclude that 17.53% respondents have 11 years or more of experience in driving KEKE NAPEEP —and 5.15% respondents are between 6-10 years' experience in driving KEKE NAPEEP. Therefore, we can conclude that respondents that have between 1 to 5 experiences are more in the study.

TABLE 4

ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS BY NUMBER OF YEARS IN KEKE NAPEEP BUSINESS

Respon ses	Frequen cy	Cumulat ive Frequen cy	Percenta ge
Less than 1 year	112.00	112.00	28.87
1-5 years	188.00	300.00	48.45
6-10 years	68.00	368.00	17.53
11 years and above	20.00	388.00	05.15
Total	388.00		100.00

Source: Researcher’s Field survey, 2024

Table 4 reveals that 28.87 percent of the total respondents have less than a year of experience in driving KEKE NAPEEP and 48.45 percent of the total respondents have between 1 and

SECTION B (GENERAL QUESTION TO RESPONDENTS)

RESULT OF GENERAL QUESTIONS DISTRIBUTED TO THE RESPONDENTS

Note: SA- Strongly agree, SD- Strongly disagree, A- Agree, D- Disagree, U- Undecided

Questi ons	Respo nse	Frequ ency	Cumu lative Frequ ency	Perce ntage (%)
1. The KEKE NAPEEP scheme has significantly improved your financial situation.	COLU MN SA SD A D U	372.0 0  16.00	372.0 0 388.0 0	95.88 04.12
2. Operating a KEKE NAPEEP has provided you	SA SD A D U	282.0 0 88.00  18.00 -	282.0 370.0 - 388.0	72.68 22.68 - 04.64

with a stable source of income.				
3. The KEKE NAPEEP scheme has made it easier for you to meet your daily expenses.	SA SD A D U	275.0 0 113.0 0 - - -	275.0 0 388.0 0	70.88 29.12
4. Your standard of living has improved since you started participating in the KEKE NAPEEP scheme.	SA SD A D U	326.0 0 62.00 - - -	326.0 0 388.0 0	84.02 15.98
5. The KEKE NAPEEP scheme has helped reduce your dependency on others for financial support	SA SD A D U	174.0 0 148.0 0 41.00 25.00	174.0 0 322.0 0 363.0 0 388.0 0 -	44.85 38.14 10.57 06.44

6. The KEKE NAPEEP scheme has provided you with better employment opportunities than what you had before.	SA SD A D U	388.0 0	388.0 0	100.0 0
7. Participating in the KEKE NAPEEP scheme has allowed you to save money regularly.	SA SD A D U	182.0 0 206.0 0	182.0 0 388.0 0	46.91 53.09
8. You feel more empowered and self-sufficient due to your involvement in the KEKE NAPEEP	SA SD A D U	388.0 0	388.0 0	100.0 0

scheme .				
9. The KEKE NAPEEP scheme has helped you to contribute to your household's income.	SASDADU	388.00	388.00	100.00
10. The income you earn from operating a KEKE NAPEEP has helped you to support your family's needs.	SASDADU	388.00	388.00	100.00
11. The KEKE NAPEEP scheme has provided you with opportunities to improve your business skills.	SASDADU	388.00	388.00	100.00

12. The KEKE NAPEEP scheme has been effective in reducing poverty in your community and FCT, Abuja	SASDADU	388.00	388.00	100.00
13. The KEKE NAPEEP scheme has helped you to achieve financial independence	SASDADU	388.00	388.00	100.00
14. The KEKE NAPEEP scheme has provided you with sufficient training to effectively manage your business .	SASDADU	388.00	388.00	100.00
15. The KEKE NAPEEP scheme has	SASDADU	388.00	388.00	100.00

enhanced your ability to plan for the future and set long-term financial goals.				
Total	Total number of respondents	388.00	Total Percentage	100.00

Source: Authors’ Research Survey, 2024

4.2.1. DISCUSSION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

The study achieved an impressive response rate of 97%, indicating high participant engagement and a strong data collection process. This level of response aligns with standards set in previous studies, suggesting that the sample is both representative and reliable for analysis. The active participation of respondents reflects the relevance of the survey, especially in regard to the KEKE NAPEEP scheme and its impact on their lives.

The demographic breakdown reveals a notable gender imbalance, with 83.51% of respondents being male. This could reflect the nature of the KEKE NAPEEP business, which might appeal more to men in FCT, Abuja. The male-dominated sample may result in different experiences and outcomes compared to a more gender-balanced sample, which is important to consider when interpreting the findings. The marital

status distribution shows that 88.14% of respondents are single, suggesting that the scheme is especially attractive to younger individuals seeking financial independence and stability. This demographic characteristic may influence the respondents' financial goals and challenges.

In terms of age, 54.12% of participants are between 25-35 years old, indicating that the KEKE NAPEEP scheme primarily attracts young adults at a formative stage of their careers. This age group is often in need of stable employment, which the scheme appears to provide, offering a potential solution to economic instability. Regarding educational qualifications, 42.27% of respondents have NCE/OND certifications, and 38.14% hold WAEC certifications. This suggests that the scheme is particularly beneficial for individuals with mid-level education, who may face fewer opportunities in the formal job market. The relatively low percentage of highly educated respondents indicates that the scheme is more suited to those with limited educational qualifications.

When examining the respondents' experience in the KEKE NAPEEP business, 48.45% have been involved for 1 to 5 years, showing that the scheme not only attracts participants but also retains them, signaling its sustainability as a source of income. However, a smaller proportion of respondents have more than 5 years of

experience, suggesting that some may eventually transition to other opportunities after gaining experience. The overwhelmingly positive feedback regarding the KEKE NAPEEP scheme highlights its significant impact on poverty alleviation. Most respondents reported improved financial stability, a steady source of income, and enhanced ability to meet daily expenses. The scheme has clearly contributed to participants' economic well-being, which is especially important in a region with high poverty and unemployment rates. The majority also agreed that it has empowered them, enabling them to contribute more effectively to their households.

Moreover, the scheme has provided valuable skills and opportunities for personal and professional growth. Respondents unanimously agreed that the scheme has helped reduce poverty within their communities, indicating its broader economic benefits in FCT, Abuja. This positive feedback underscores the importance of the KEKE NAPEEP scheme as a tool for poverty alleviation, helping participants achieve greater financial stability and contributing to the region's economic development.

4.3 TEST OF HYPOTHESES

HYPOTHESIS ONE

**H01: The KEKE NAPEEP scheme has not significantly improved the**

**driver’s financial situation in FCT, Abuja.**

Table5

SPEARMAN’S CORRELATION RESULT

**Correlation Coefficient	**pp	Spearman’s Rank correlation Calculated
At 2 tailed	388	0.771

\*\*Spearman’s Rank  
Correlation Coefficient

\*\*Population: 388

\*\*Scale: 5

\*\*Date: 12/08/2024

SOURCE: SPSS PACKAGE

From the result above, the spearman’s rank correlation coefficient calculated is 0.771, the degree and the total number of respondents is 388. However, the spearman’s rank correlation coefficient using 5% level of significance is 0.05. Therefore, Since the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient of 0.771 is high and the corresponding p-value is likely to be less than 0.05, we will reject the null hypothesis (H0) and concludes that the KEKE NAPEEP scheme has a

significantly improved the driver’s financial situation in FCT, Abuja.

**HYPOTHESIS TWO**  
**H02: The KEKE NAPEEP scheme**  
**has not significantly improved the**  
**driver's standard of living in FCT,**  
**Abuja.**

**Table 6**  
**SPEARMAN’S CORRELATION**  
**RESULT**

**\*\*Spearman’s Rank**  
**Correlation Coefficient**  
**\*\*Population: 388**  
**\*\*Scale: 5**  
**\*\*Date: 12/08/2024**

**SOURCE: SPSS PACKAGE**

<b>**Correlation Coefficient</b>	<b>**pp</b>	<b>Spearman’s Rank correlation Calculated</b>
<b>At 2 tailed</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>0.851</b>

From the result above, the spearman’s rank correlation coefficient calculated is 0.784, the degree and the total number of respondents is 388. However, the spearman’s rank correlation coefficient using 5% level of significance is 0.05. Therefore, Since the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient of 0.784 is high and the

corresponding p-value is likely to be less than 0.05, we will reject the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) and concludes that the KEKE NAPEEP scheme has significantly improved the driver's standard of living in FCT, Abuja.

**HYPOTHESIS THREE**

**H03: The KEKE NAPEEP empowerment scheme has not provided drivers with better employment opportunities in FCT, Abuja**

**Table 7**

<b>**Correlation Coefficient</b>	<b>**pp</b>	<b>Spearman’s Rank correlation Calculated</b>
<b>At 2 tailed</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>0.784</b>

**SPEARMAN’S CORRELATION**  
**RESULT**

**\*\*Spearman’s Rank**  
**Correlation Coefficient**  
**\*\*Population: 388**  
**\*\*Scale: 5**  
**\*\*Date: 12/08/2024**

**SOURCE: SPSS PACKAGE**

From the result above, the spearman’s rank correlation coefficient calculated is 0.851, the degree and the total number of respondents is 388. However, the spearman’s rank correlation coefficient using 5% level of significance is 0.05. Therefore,

Since the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient of 0.851 is high and the corresponding p-value is likely to be less than 0.05, we will reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and concludes that the KEKE NAPEEP empowerment scheme has provided drivers with better employment opportunities IN FCT, Abuja.

#### 4.4. Discussion of findings

The study's impressive 97% response rate highlights strong participant engagement, suggesting that the data is highly reliable. This aligns with findings from Dillman (2014), who observed that high response rates often reflect the perceived relevance of the survey topic. Demographic analysis indicates a significant gender imbalance, with 83.51% male respondents, which may be a result of the KEKE NAPEEP business appealing more to men in FCT, Abuja. This male dominance could limit the generalizability of the findings, as male-centered data may not fully capture the experiences of women, a concern echoed by Geetika & Singh (2011), who noted that gender imbalances in sample populations can affect broader applicability.

The study also reveals that 88.14% of participants are single, which suggests that the KEKE NAPEEP scheme is particularly attractive to young, unmarried individuals seeking financial independence. Curtis &

Mulvey (2012) similarly found that single individuals in gig-based economies often pursue self-employment for financial freedom and job security. Additionally, 54.12% of respondents are aged between 25 and 35, reinforcing the scheme's appeal to young adults in search of career stability. This finding aligns with Bhorat & Tarp (2016), who noted that employment programs targeting youth tend to have strong uptake, as young adults are often more open to flexible, income-generating opportunities. The lower representation of older individuals in the sample suggests that the scheme may be less attractive to established workers who might prefer more traditional, stable employment options, as suggested by De Hoyos & Rogers (2016).

The educational background of respondents, with a significant portion holding NCE/OND (42.27%) and WAEC certifications (38.14%), indicates that the KEKE NAPEEP scheme largely attracts individuals with mid-level education, who may face limited opportunities in the formal job market. Bacolod et al. (2009) found that individuals with vocational or mid-level qualifications often turn to informal or gig-based sectors, which do not require formal academic credentials. The relatively low proportion of highly educated respondents suggests that the scheme



provides essential employment opportunities for those with limited access to higher-paying, specialized jobs.

Nearly half (48.45%) of respondents have been involved in the KEKE NAPEEP scheme for 1 to 5 years, suggesting that the scheme provides sustainable income over time. Kim & Davis (2016) similarly found that long-term participation in gig and entrepreneurial ventures typically indicates stable and reliable income. Furthermore, 28.87% of participants have been involved for less than a year, highlighting the scheme's ongoing appeal and its ability to attract new entrants.

The overwhelmingly positive feedback regarding the scheme's role in poverty alleviation further supports its impact, with many respondents noting improvements in their financial stability and daily living conditions. This mirrors Fajnzylber et al. (2011), who found that micro-entrepreneurial programs significantly enhance economic security and self-sufficiency for low-income participants. Additionally, participants unanimously agreed that the scheme has empowered them, aligning with Shah's (2013) research, which found that micro-entrepreneurial programs promote financial and social empowerment. The participants also noted how the

scheme has helped build skills and foster personal growth, a result consistent with Blattman et al. (2014), who emphasized that skill-building initiatives contribute to both individual and community-level economic development. Finally, the consensus on the scheme's role in providing valuable employment opportunities and facilitating long-term financial planning underscores its lasting impact, fostering economic stability for participants.

## **5.0. Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **5.1. Conclusion**

The KEKE NAPEEP scheme in FCT Abuja exemplifies how targeted youth empowerment programs can contribute to poverty alleviation by providing young drivers with financial assistance and vocational training, which significantly improves various aspects of their lives. Through financial support and access to necessary resources, the initiative has helped drivers secure more stable incomes, addressing the financial challenges often faced by unemployed or underemployed youth, thus aiding in poverty reduction (Ademola, 2023). In addition to financial relief, the program has enhanced participants' quality of life by offering greater financial security, allowing them to access improved housing, healthcare, and education—

key indicators of a better standard of living. This demonstrates the positive impact of economic empowerment in uplifting individuals' overall well-being (Bello, 2022). Moreover, the KEKE NAPEEP program has expanded employment opportunities within the transportation sector by providing vocational training and supporting job creation for drivers. This, in turn, contributes to reducing unemployment and fostering regional economic growth. The initiative highlights a successful youth empowerment model that not only enhances financial stability and living standards but also creates employment pathways for young people in Abuja. These positive outcomes suggest that similarly designed and well-implemented empowerment programs can play a crucial role in poverty alleviation, particularly in regions with high levels of youth unemployment (Ademola, 2023; Bello, 2022).

## 5.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings the following practical recommendations can be made to the government:

- Expand the KEKE NAPEEP scheme to other regions in Nigeria, enabling similar financial and employment benefits across the country by tailoring the program to meet local needs.
- Invest in enhanced training and support services, covering essential skills in vehicle maintenance, financial literacy, and customer service, to help drivers optimize their earnings and maintain vehicle quality.
- Introduce subsidies and incentives for vehicle upgrades, such as low-interest loans or grants for eco-friendly modifications, to boost earning potential and promote environmental sustainability.
- Establish a monitoring and evaluation system to regularly assess the program's impact, ensure fair distribution of benefits, and incorporate participant feedback for continuous improvement.
- Improve access to additional financial services, including savings accounts, insurance, and microloans, through partnerships with financial institutions to help drivers secure their financial future and manage expenses effectively.

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