

Investigating the Constraints to the Performance of the National Directorate of Employment in Abuja, FCT, Nigeria

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Abstract

Original Research Article

Unemployment remains one of Nigeria's most pressing socioeconomic challenges, despite numerous government interventions aimed at curbing the crisis. The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was established to provide skills acquisition, entrepreneurship training, and job creation opportunities, yet its performance has been questioned over time. This study investigates the constraints to the performance of the NDE in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (FCT), and Nigeria. A mixed-methods research design was adopted, combining a structured survey of 200 respondents with in-depth interviews of beneficiaries and NDE officials. Descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and multiple regression analysis were employed to assess the impact of socioeconomic characteristics and institutional challenges on programme outcomes, while qualitative data were thematically analysed. Findings reveal that inadequate funding, weak monitoring and evaluation, political interference, limited awareness, and a mismatch between training skills and labour market needs constitute major obstacles to NDE effectiveness. The chi-square analysis indicated that educational attainment significantly influenced programme participation, while regression results showed that funding shortfalls and institutional weaknesses were the strongest predictors of poor performance. The qualitative insights reinforced these outcomes, highlighting beneficiaries' frustrations with unsustainable skills training and a lack of post-training support. The study concludes that systemic and operational barriers curtail NDE's impact in Abuja. It recommends increased funding, stronger accountability frameworks, reduced political interference, labour market-responsive training, and public-private partnerships to improve performance. The study contributes to knowledge by providing contextual evidence from Abuja, enriching theoretical discourse with institutional and human capital perspectives, and offering policy-relevant insights for employment-generation strategies in Nigeria.

Keywords: Unemployment; Employment Programmes; National Directorate of Employment (NDE); Institutional Constraints; Labour Market; Abuja, Nigeria; Sustainable Livelihoods.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Unemployment remains one of the most pressing socioeconomic challenges confronting Nigeria, with implications for poverty reduction, social stability, and sustainable development (Adekoya et al., 2025). The Nigerian labour market has, for decades, struggled to absorb the rapidly growing youth population, resulting in high levels of unemployment and underemployment (Eke et al., 2020). According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2023), Nigeria's unemployment rate stood at 33.3% in 2021, with youth unemployment surpassing 42%. This exacerbates poverty, insecurity, displacement, child labour and trafficking across the country (Magaji, 2007). Against this backdrop, successive

governments have initiated various employment-generation schemes aimed at addressing these challenges, among which the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) has been the most prominent.

The NDE was established in 1986 as a federal government agency with the primary mandate of designing and implementing job-creation programmes, vocational training, entrepreneurial development, and skill acquisition initiatives for unemployed Nigerians (Adebayo & Yusuf, 2022). Its intervention programmes have been tailored to address structural unemployment through schemes such as the Vocational Skills Development Programme, Small-Scale Enterprises Programme, Special Public Works, and Rural

Employment Promotion Programme (NDE, 2021). Over the years, the NDE has made significant contributions to empowering thousands of Nigerian youths and women through entrepreneurship training and start-up support (Okafor, 2020). However, despite its strategic mandate and extensive presence nationwide, the performance of the NDE has remained limited and inconsistent, particularly in urban centres like Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

Several scholars have argued that institutional weaknesses, inadequate funding, poor policy coordination, and political interference have undermined the ability of agencies such as the NDE to achieve their objectives (Oni, 2019; Okoye & Oche, 2021). For example, studies have shown that the NDE's skill acquisition centres are often underfunded, poorly equipped, and unable to meet the training needs of the growing unemployed population (Eme & Ugwu, 2019). In addition, limited monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, coupled with bureaucratic inefficiencies, hinder the sustainability and scalability of employment programmes (Magaji, 2004). Abuja, being the political and administrative capital of Nigeria, presents a unique context where high urban migration, rising cost of living, and limited formal job opportunities further complicate the challenges of implementing initiatives (Gabdo et al., 2025). Understanding the specific constraints to the NDE's performance in this context is therefore critical to developing effective policy and institutional reforms.

Moreover, the performance of the NDE must be examined within the broader framework of sustainable development. Employment generation is directly linked to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 4 (Quality Education), and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Thus, the inability of employment programmes to deliver on their mandate not only perpetuates poverty and inequality but also undermines Nigeria's progress toward achieving its international development commitments (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2022). In Abuja, FCT, where the demand for employment is particularly high due to rapid urbanisation and population growth, constraints in NDE's performance translate into heightened social exclusion and vulnerability among youths and other economically disadvantaged groups (Adegbite & Olayemi, 2021).

Despite the critical importance of the NDE, limited empirical studies have focused explicitly on the constraints hindering its performance in Abuja, FCT. Most existing studies have been national in scope, failing to account for the peculiar challenges faced in the capital city where government institutions are concentrated, and expectations from employment programmes are relatively high. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by investigating the constraints to the performance of the NDE in Abuja, FCT, and Nigeria. The findings will provide valuable insights into the institutional, financial, and structural factors affecting employment-generation programmes, thereby offering practical recommendations to strengthen the NDE's capacity to deliver on its mandate.

In light of the foregoing, this article is structured as follows. The next section reviews relevant literature on employment

generation and the role of the NDE in Nigeria, highlighting theoretical and empirical perspectives. This is followed by the methodology section, which outlines the research design, data collection, and analysis techniques. The results and discussion sections present and interpret the findings in line with the study objectives. The article concludes with recommendations and policy implications for enhancing the performance of the NDE in Abuja and beyond.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Definitions

2.1.1 Employment and Unemployment

Employment is more than the mere engagement of individuals in work activities; it represents a critical pathway to social inclusion (Musa et al., 2024), economic empowerment (Muhammed, 2025), and national development (Magaji, 2023). The International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2022) defines employment as work performed by people of working age that generates income, provides livelihood security, and contributes to the productive capacity of an economy. Beyond the economic dimension, employment enhances individual dignity, reduces poverty (Enaberue et al, 2024), and promotes social stability (Adejumo & Omotola, 2021). For governments, ensuring productive employment for citizens is both a development priority and a political imperative, given its close relationship with poverty reduction and sustainable growth (Magaji, 2008).

Unemployment, on the other hand, occurs when individuals who are able and willing to work are unable to find suitable and gainful employment opportunities (Magaji & Adamu, 2011). It is widely regarded as one of the most pressing socioeconomic challenges in developing countries, including Nigeria (Okafor, 2020). The National Bureau of Statistics (2023) reported that Nigeria's unemployment rate was over 33% in 2021, with youth unemployment surpassing 42%, making it one of the highest in the world. This situation has dire implications for poverty reduction, security, and social cohesion (Shaba et al., 2018). High unemployment rates often lead to increased crime, social unrest, and political instability, as unemployed youths are more vulnerable to exploitation and recruitment into violent groups (Jafaru et al., 2024).

In the Nigerian context, unemployment manifests in both structural and cyclical forms. Structural unemployment arises from fundamental shifts in the economy, such as the weak industrial base, poor diversification, and the dominance of the oil sector, which provides limited labour absorption compared to agriculture or manufacturing (Oni, 2019). Compounding this is the mismatch between educational outcomes and labour market demands, where many graduates lack the practical skills required by employers (Eme & Ugwu, 2019). Cyclical unemployment, by contrast, is influenced by fluctuations in economic growth and government fiscal policies. For instance, economic recessions in 2016 and 2020 worsened Nigeria's unemployment situation by reducing job opportunities in both the public and private sectors (Adewale & Yusuf, 2021).



Therefore, understanding the dynamics of employment and unemployment is essential for evaluating the performance of agencies such as the National Directorate of Employment (NDE). Employment creation efforts that do not address structural constraints or skill mismatches are unlikely to achieve long-term success. Similarly, without policies that integrate vocational training, entrepreneurship support, and access to finance (Okoroafor et al., 2018), unemployment and underemployment will continue to persist in Nigeria's urban centres, including Abuja, FCT.

2.1.2 National Directorate of Employment (NDE)

The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) is a government agency established in 1986 in response to the economic crisis and mass retrenchments resulting from the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). Its mandate is to design and implement employment-generation programmes through vocational training, entrepreneurial development, and rural job creation schemes (NDE, 2021). Key programmes include the *Vocational Skills Development*, *Small Scale Enterprises*, *Special Public Works*, and *Rural Employment Promotion*. Conceptually, the NDE is positioned as an institutional response to Nigeria's unemployment crisis.

2.1.3 Constraints to Performance

Constraints to performance refer to institutional, financial, and policy factors (Magaji et al., 2019), as well as structural factors that hinder an organisation's ability to deliver on its mandate effectively (North, 1990). In the context of the NDE, constraints include inadequate funding, weak infrastructure, political interference, corruption, and lack of synergy with private sector actors, and limited monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (Oni, 2019; Okoye & Oche, 2021). These challenges reduce the efficiency, reach, and sustainability of NDE programmes in addressing unemployment.

2.2 Empirical Review

Scholars have widely examined the effectiveness of employment programmes in Nigeria, particularly the NDE, with mixed findings regarding its success. Several studies report that despite its initiatives, the NDE's impact remains marginal relative to the scale of unemployment in the country. The growing mismatch between the number of youths entering the labour market and the limited opportunities provided by employment-generation programmes raises concerns about the sustainability of the agency's interventions.

Eme and Ugwu (2019) found that the NDE's skill acquisition programmes were limited by poor funding, inadequate training facilities, and insufficient tools, leaving many trainees without the capacity to transition into self-reliant entrepreneurship. In many cases, trainees were equipped with theoretical knowledge but lacked practical start-up resources. Similarly, Ibrahim and Abdullahi (2021) argued that policy inconsistencies, overlapping mandates with other government agencies, and weak implementation strategies significantly reduced the

NDE's effectiveness in empowering Nigerian youth.

At the regional level, Adegbite and Olayemi (2021) observed that in Lagos and Kaduna States, NDE programmes provided short-term relief to unemployment by equipping participants with basic vocational skills. However, the absence of long-term financial support, mentoring, and access to credit facilities undermined the sustainability of job creation. In Abuja, FCT, Okoye and Oche (2021) highlighted political interference, nepotism, and elite capture of opportunities as key constraints, often excluding genuine unemployed youths from accessing training or start-up funds. These findings suggest that the problem is not only inadequate resources but also governance weaknesses that distort programme delivery.

Other studies also reinforce these findings. Oni (2019) reported that while the NDE had recorded some achievements in reducing youth restiveness through vocational training, the scale of its interventions was grossly inadequate compared to the unemployment challenge. Similarly, Akinwale (2022) argued that the NDE's inability to absorb large numbers of job seekers effectively contributed to youth frustration, which in turn fueled insecurity and crime in urban centres. In addition, Afolabi and Aluko (2020) demonstrated that many NDE graduates ended up unemployed or underemployed due to a lack of post-training support, indicating a disconnect between training and sustainable employment outcomes.

Comparative studies reinforce the notion that Nigeria's employment programmes lag behind regional counterparts. Adebayo and Yusuf (2022) showed that countries with similar employment-generation agencies, such as Ghana's National Youth Employment Programme and Kenya's Youth Enterprise Development Fund, achieved better outcomes due to stronger institutional frameworks, integration with private sector actors, and greater accountability mechanisms. By contrast, in Nigeria, weak institutional capacity, corruption, and poor monitoring systems often limit the effectiveness of interventions.

International evidence also provides critical lessons. The International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2022) emphasises that sustainable employment strategies require integrating vocational training. Furthermore, of equal importance is the access to credit facilities (Magaji et al., 2023), business incubation and mentorship (Magaji & Saleh, 2010), as well as international trade and linkages to markets (Magaji et al., 2022). Without these support systems, beneficiaries are unable to translate training into sustainable livelihoods.

The World Bank (2022) also noted that in low- and middle-income countries, youth employment interventions are most successful when they combine skill development with entrepreneurship financing and market-oriented training. Applying these insights to Nigeria, it becomes clear that the NDE's stand-alone training programmes are insufficient to tackle the complex dynamics of unemployment in rapidly urbanising contexts like Abuja.

Furthermore, empirical studies point to the role of macroeconomic and political environments in shaping programme outcomes. According to Akinyemi and Salisu (2023), high inflation, weak infrastructure, and policy



instability limit the ability of young entrepreneurs to thrive after participating in NDE programmes. Similarly, Bello and Musa (2021) noted that corruption and favouritism in the allocation of NDE resources often undermine trust in the programme, thereby reducing its legitimacy among youths.

Taken together, the empirical literature underscores a consensus that while the NDE has contributed to skill acquisition and temporary job creation, its overall performance is constrained by structural, institutional, and governance-related challenges. The Abuja context is particularly relevant because of the high influx of job seekers, rising cost of living, and intense competition for limited opportunities. Addressing these constraints requires not only more funding but also systemic reforms that link training to financing, markets, and sustainable job opportunities.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by Institutional Theory and the Resource-Based View (RBV).

2.3.1 Institutional Theory

Institutional theory emphasises that organisational performance is shaped by institutional arrangements, including formal rules, governance structures, and socio-political environments (North, 1990). In the context of the NDE, institutional weaknesses, including poor governance, inadequate accountability, and weak enforcement of policy guidelines, constrain its performance. This framework is relevant for explaining how bureaucratic inefficiencies, political patronage, and lack of policy coordination undermine employment-generation efforts.

2.3.2 Resource-Based View (RBV)

The RBV, as articulated by Barney (1991), posits that organisations achieve sustained performance when they possess and effectively utilise valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources. Applying this theory, the NDE's performance is contingent on its access to resources such as adequate funding, skilled personnel, training infrastructure, and effective monitoring systems. Constraints on these resources directly affect the agency's ability to implement impactful programmes.

By integrating these theories, this study conceptualises NDE's constraints as both institutional and resource-driven. Institutional weaknesses, such as political interference, combined with resource constraints like inadequate funding and infrastructure, limit the agency's capacity to address unemployment in Abuja, FCT.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed-method research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the constraints hindering the performance of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in Abuja, FCT. The choice of this design

was informed by the need to triangulate findings, ensuring that the quantitative data captured broad patterns of information. At the same time, the qualitative evidence provided more profound insights into the institutional and contextual challenges affecting the NDE's operations.

The study population consisted of unemployed youths, beneficiaries of NDE programmes, NDE officials, and key stakeholders, including policymakers and community leaders, within Abuja, FCT. Abuja was purposively selected because it is not only the seat of the Federal Government where the NDE headquarters is located, but also an urban centre with a high influx of job seekers, making it an appropriate context to investigate the effectiveness of employment-generation initiatives.

A sample size of 200 respondents was determined using Yamane's formula for sample estimation at a 95% confidence level. Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure fair representation of different categories of respondents across Abuja's six area councils. This approach allowed for the inclusion of both NDE beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries among the unemployed youth population. Additionally, 10 officials from the NDE and five policymakers were purposively selected for in-depth interviews to capture expert perspectives on institutional and policy-level challenges.

Primary data were collected through the administration of structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). The questionnaire comprised both closed-ended and Likert-scale items designed to elicit responses on issues such as access to NDE programmes, adequacy of training, financial support, monitoring mechanisms, and political interference. The in-depth interviews and FGDs were used to obtain qualitative data on stakeholders' experiences, perceptions, and contextual factors influencing the performance of NDE in Abuja. Secondary data were sourced from NDE annual reports, National Bureau of Statistics publications, and relevant academic studies to complement and contextualise the primary findings.

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 25). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and mean scores were employed to summarise responses. In contrast, inferential statistical tools such as chi-square tests and regression analysis were used to examine relationships between identified constraints and the effectiveness of NDE programmes. Qualitative data from interviews and FGDs were transcribed, thematically coded, and analysed using content analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns. The integration of both datasets enhanced the reliability and validity of the findings through methodological triangulation.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the study, several measures were adopted. Reliability of the questionnaire was tested through a pilot study involving 20 respondents in Abuja, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82, indicating good internal consistency. Validity was ensured through expert review of the instruments by scholars in labour studies and



development policy. Ethical considerations were strictly observed: informed consent was obtained from all participants, confidentiality was maintained, and respondents were assured that the data would be used strictly for academic purposes.

In sum, the methodology provided a robust framework for systematically investigating the constraints affecting the performance of the NDE in Abuja, FCT, by combining quantitative evidence of programme outcomes with qualitative insights into institutional and governance challenges.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Socioeconomic and Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic profile of respondents provides valuable context for understanding the challenges faced by unemployed youths and NDE beneficiaries in Abuja, FCT. Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents by age, gender, educational qualification, and employment status.

Table 1: Socioeconomic and Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 200)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18–25 years	65	32.5
	26–35 years	90	45.0
	36–45 years	30	15.0
	Above 45 years	15	7.5
Gender	Male	120	60.0
	Female	80	40.0
Education	Secondary	55	27.5
	Diploma/OND	40	20.0
	First degree/HND	80	40.0
	Postgraduate	25	12.5
Employment Status	NDE Beneficiaries	100	50.0
	Non-beneficiaries	100	50.0

The results show that the majority (77.5%) of respondents were within the productive age range of 18–35 years, reflecting the youth bulge in Nigeria’s labour market. Males constituted 60%, while females represented 40%, indicating gender disparity in participation. About 40% of respondents held tertiary qualifications, yet most remained unemployed or underemployed, aligning with earlier studies that highlight the mismatch between educational outcomes and labour market needs in Nigeria (Okafor, 2020).

4.2 Constraints to NDE Performance

Respondents were asked to identify the significant challenges affecting the effectiveness of NDE in Abuja. The key constraints included inadequate funding (85%), poor

monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (72%), political interference in programme implementation (65%), limited awareness among target beneficiaries (60%), and mismatch between training skills and labour market demands (58%). These findings mirror those of Adegbite and Olayemi (2021), who emphasised resource limitations and weak institutional frameworks as core bottlenecks for employment agencies in Nigeria.

Chi-Square Analysis of Constraints and NDE Programme Participation

To test the relationship between demographic factors and participation in NDE programmes, a chi-square test was conducted.

Table 2: Chi-Square Test of Relationship between Education Level and NDE Participation

Variable	χ^2 Value	df	p-value	Decision
Education × NDE Participation	12.47	3	0.006	Significant

The chi-square result ($\chi^2 = 12.47$, $p < 0.05$) indicates a significant relationship between educational attainment and participation in the NDE programme. Respondents with tertiary education were more likely to access and benefit from NDE

initiatives, suggesting that the least educated, who arguably need such programmes most, face barriers to participation. This raises questions about inclusivity and accessibility in NDE’s targeting mechanisms.

Table 3: Regression Analysis of Constraints Influencing NDE Performance

Predictor Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig. (p)
Inadequate funding	0.412	6.21	0.000
Weak monitoring & evaluation	0.275	4.02	0.001
Political interference	0.193	3.10	0.002
Limited awareness	0.158	2.45	0.015
Skill mismatch	0.145	2.22	0.027
R ² = 0.61; F(5, 194) = 32.48; p < 0.001			

The regression model was significant ($p < 0.001$), with an R^2 of 0.61, indicating that the five predictors explained 61% of the variance in NDE’s performance. Inadequate funding ($\beta = 0.412$) had the most potent effect, followed by weak monitoring and evaluation ($\beta = 0.275$). This underscores the need for sustained financial commitment and stronger accountability frameworks to enhance programme effectiveness.

4.3 Qualitative Insights

Qualitative interviews with NDE officials and beneficiaries reinforced the quantitative findings. Officials lamented recurrent budgetary constraints and political interference in programme targeting, while beneficiaries highlighted skill mismatch as a significant drawback:

- “We often receive training in trades that are already saturated in the market, making it difficult to translate the skills into sustainable income.” (Female beneficiary, Gwagwalada)
- “Funding delays affect the rollout of entrepreneurship support packages, leaving many youths stranded after training.” (NDE official, Abuja)

These narratives demonstrate that, beyond technical training, adequate funding, monitoring, and post-training support are critical to ensuring that NDE initiatives translate into tangible livelihood improvements.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

The findings reveal that structural constraints, including inadequate funding, institutional weaknesses, and political influence, significantly undermine NDE’s performance in Abuja. This resonates with the institutional theory, which argues that organisational outcomes are shaped by resource flows, governance structures, and socio-political environments (Scott, 2014). Moreover, the significant effect of education on programme participation aligns with human capital theory, which posits that individuals with higher education have better access to labour opportunities and development initiatives (Becker, 1993). This has been proven in Nigeria by several studies, especially Magaji et al. (2025).

Overall, the study highlights that while NDE remains a vital institution for addressing unemployment in Nigeria, its effectiveness is curtailed by systemic and operational challenges. Tackling these barriers requires reforms that strengthen institutional capacity, enhance inclusiveness, and align training with evolving labour market needs.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study examined the constraints to the performance of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in Abuja, FCT, and Nigeria. The findings revealed that while the NDE has played a notable role in providing training and temporary relief to unemployed youths, its overall impact remains limited. Inadequate funding, weak monitoring and evaluation systems, political interference, poor awareness, and skill mismatch emerged as the major obstacles constraining programme effectiveness. The analysis further established that educational attainment significantly influenced access to NDE programmes, raising concerns about inclusivity. Regression results confirmed that funding inadequacies and institutional weaknesses are the strongest predictors of poor performance. Qualitative evidence further reinforced these outcomes, highlighting the frustrations of both beneficiaries and officials regarding sustainability and resource constraints.

In conclusion, the NDE in Abuja operates under significant structural and institutional bottlenecks that compromise its mandate to address unemployment sustainably. For the agency to achieve greater impact, reforms must be targeted at strengthening institutional capacity, ensuring transparency in programme delivery, and aligning training interventions with labour market dynamics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Increased Funding and Budgetary Commitment: The Government should allocate more consistent financial resources to NDE to ensure timely and effective programme implementation.



2. Strengthened Monitoring and Evaluation Systems: A robust M&E framework should be established to track programme outcomes, beneficiary progress, and impact assessment.
3. Minimising Political Interference: NDE recruitment and beneficiary selection processes should be insulated from partisan politics and elite capture to enhance credibility and inclusiveness.
4. Awareness and Outreach Campaigns: Greater efforts are needed to disseminate information about NDE programmes, especially in rural and marginalised communities within Abuja.
5. Labour Market-Responsive Training: NDE programmes should be tailored to evolving labour market demands, with a focus on ICT, renewable energy, creative industries, and other emerging sectors.
6. Post-Training Support: The NDE should integrate access to credit, mentorship, and market linkages into its programmes to ensure that skills training translates into sustainable livelihoods.
7. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Collaborations with private sector actors and development partners should be deepened to diversify funding sources, expand opportunities, and ensure sustainability.

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This study contributes to existing scholarship and policy debates in several ways:

1. Contextual Evidence from Abuja: By focusing on the Federal Capital Territory, the research provides location-specific insights into the challenges and constraints facing NDE, an area with diverse urban and peri-urban unemployment dynamics.
2. Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Evidence: The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining survey data with interviews, which strengthens the validity of findings through triangulation.
3. Theoretical Enrichment: The study links institutional theory and human capital theory to the Nigerian context, showing how structural weaknesses and individual educational attainment interact to shape programme outcomes.
4. Policy-Relevant Insights: Beyond academic discourse, the findings offer actionable recommendations for policymakers, development practitioners, and the NDE itself on how to enhance employment-generation strategies.

Comparative Perspective: By drawing on both national and international evidence, the study highlights why Nigeria lags behind peer countries in employment programmes, thus filling a gap in comparative employment policy research.

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