

ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA: COVERAGE GAPS, SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS, AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STABILITY

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Abstract

This study examines the effectiveness of Social Security Programs (SSPs) in Nigeria, focusing on awareness levels, coverage gaps, socioeconomic impacts, and their role in addressing social security challenges. Using a mixed-methods approach and cross-sectional survey design, the research analyzes data from respondents in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, representing formal and informal workers, retirees, and vulnerable populations. Findings reveal significant limitations in SSP coverage, particularly for informal sector workers, due to barriers such as high costs and lack of awareness. While pension schemes demonstrate positive impacts on retirees' financial stability, the overall effectiveness of SSPs in reducing poverty and unemployment remains limited. Security challenges persist because of insufficient youth-focused initiatives and administrative inefficiencies, though programs show potential for mitigating crime and enhancing public order when effectively implemented. Recommendations include expanding coverage to informal workers, improving administrative efficiency, increasing public awareness, and integrating youth empowerment initiatives into SSP frameworks.

Key words: *social security; socioeconomic stability; pension reform*

JEL Classification: E02, H55, M14

I. INTRODUCTION

Social security has long been considered essential for ensuring social and economic stability, especially in developing countries where poverty, unemployment, and other vulnerabilities are widespread (Bailey & Turner, 2002; Odedokun, 2021). The theoretical foundations of social security rest on principles of social contract theory, which emphasizes the state's responsibility to provide support for vulnerable populations in exchange for civil compliance and social stability (Olise & Emeh, 2019). Social control theory also supports the idea that a well-functioning social security system mitigates crime and social disorder by providing basic necessities and reducing motivations for criminal behavior (Oluwajenyo *et al.*, 2022). These theories highlight social security as a fundamental component of governance aimed at reducing inequality and promoting national development. Social security in Nigeria has evolved in response to socio-economic challenges and the influence of global social protection trends (Nwabueze, 1975). During the colonial era, social security schemes were primarily designed to benefit civil servants, leaving the vast majority of citizens in the informal sector without access to these benefits (Anifalaje, 2019). Early legislative efforts, such as the National Provident Fund (NPF), were limited in scope and failed to meet the needs of the general population effectively. Despite subsequent reforms, such as the Pension Reform Act of 2004, which aimed to unify and expand coverage, implementation challenges have hindered these schemes' efficacy (Nwekeaku & Abimuku, 2019). A key limitation has been the narrow coverage of these programs, primarily focusing on formal sector employees, while the informal sector remains largely unprotected (Arum & Likinyo, 2024). Modern-day Nigeria faces a plethora of social and economic challenges, including high unemployment, widespread poverty, and an escalating insecurity crisis, all of which underscore the need for a robust social security framework (Adesina, 2013; Oketa, 2024). The lack of adequate social security has contributed to these issues, as vulnerable groups, including the aged, unemployed, and those in the informal sector, lack access to stable income and healthcare (Olanipekun & Agboola, 2021). Social security schemes such as the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) have attempted to bridge the gap in healthcare provision, but limited coverage and operational inefficiencies restrict their impact (Kwanga *et al.*, 2013). This inadequate coverage and lack of enforceable rights in most social security programs limit their effectiveness in addressing the economic

needs of Nigerian citizens (Anifalaje, 2017).

Statement of Problem

The social security framework in Nigeria is confronted with significant challenges, including policy inconsistency, corruption, and a persistent lack of political will, all of which undermine the effectiveness of current programs (Oluwajenyo et al., 2022; Anifalaje, 2020). One pressing issue is the exclusion of the informal sector, which comprises a substantial portion of Nigeria's workforce, from contributory pension schemes (Arum & Likinyo, 2024). This exclusion leaves many Nigerians without access to basic income security upon retirement, exacerbating poverty among the elderly population and contributing to a lack of financial stability for informal workers (Adebagbo, 1988). Additionally, corruption and mismanagement within the system hinder the efficient distribution of social security benefits, with delays in pension payments and cases of fund diversion being common (Nwekeaku & Abimuku, 2019). These systemic issues underscore an urgent need for legislative reforms and a comprehensive policy approach that emphasizes accountability and extends social security coverage to include those currently marginalized. Studies reveal that a robust social security system can significantly improve socioeconomic stability by reducing poverty, supporting employment, and enhancing public health (Atata et al., 2021; Ikuomola, 2019). However, the gaps in Nigeria's current social security provisions are apparent in the rising rates of unemployment and insecurity, as individuals struggle to meet basic needs without adequate support systems (Adesina, 2013). Existing initiatives, such as the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) and the Pension Reform Act, have demonstrated potential benefits, but accessibility and administrative constraints limit their impact on Nigerian society (Kwanga et al., 2013). Furthermore, data from retired individuals, informal workers, and elderly populations highlight substantial deficiencies in coverage, reinforcing the need for policy expansion and enhanced support for these vulnerable groups (Ayorinde et al., 2016).

Objectives of the Study

- To assess awareness and perceptions of the legislative evolution and scope of social security policies in Nigeria, with a particular focus on coverage gaps for informal sector workers and elderly citizens.
- To evaluate the perceived impact of social security programs on socioeconomic stability in Nigeria, particularly regarding poverty alleviation, unemployment reduction, and crime prevention.
- To investigate views on the role of social security in addressing security challenges in Nigeria, especially its potential to maintain public order and reduce crime among unemployed youth.

Research Questions

- How aware are people of social security policies in Nigeria, and what coverage gaps exist for informal sector workers and retirees?
- What impact do social security programs have on addressing socioeconomic issues, such as poverty and unemployment, in Nigeria?
- How is the role of social security perceived in mitigating security challenges, including crime and social unrest, in Nigeria?

Scope of the Study

This study will focus on three primary groups within Nigeria's population in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja: retired persons, informal sector workers, and aged citizens. As Nigeria's capital, FCT Abuja presents a unique socio-economic landscape that combines formal employees from government and private sectors with a substantial population in the informal sector who frequently lack sufficient social protection (Anifalaje, 2017; Arum & Likinyo, 2024). This region is ideal for assessing social security needs across various demographic groups, as it includes retired federal employees eligible for pension benefits and elderly individuals facing gaps in social welfare access (Nwekeaku & Abimuku, 2019; Oketa, 2024). Additionally, the FCT's proximity to government ministries responsible for social security administration facilitates a thorough examination of program implementation and oversight. As a hub for national policy-making, findings from Abuja are directly relevant to informing national reforms aimed at enhancing social security inclusivity across Nigeria (Eke-Jeffry, 2014).

II. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts an idealist ontology and interpretivist epistemology, viewing social security as a construct shaped by social, economic, and political interactions. It emphasizes the subjective experiences of informal sector workers, retirees, and the aged in accessing and benefitting from social security programs, where knowledge emerges from participants' perceptions of policies and their implementation (Anifalaje, 2017; Arum & Likinyo, 2024). A cross-sectional survey design was employed, using a structured online questionnaire to collect data over 14 days. The survey, distributed via social media, social clubs, and employer networks, captured respondents' perceptions of social security coverage, impact, and gaps (Odedokun, 2021; Oluwajenyo et al., 2022), ensuring

diverse participation and authentic insights.

Population, Sample, and Sampling Technique

The study focuses on three target groups within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja: retirees, informal sector workers, and aged citizens, as these groups are directly relevant to the objectives of the research. Due to the heterogeneous nature of the population, the sample size was capped at 195 respondents for manageability and relevance. Purposive sampling was employed to select individuals with direct experiences or insights into social security schemes in Abuja. The distribution of the sample included 60 retired persons, 80 informal sector workers, and 55 aged citizens. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire, which was divided into four sections. The first section captured demographic information such as gender, age group, employment sector, education level, and income bracket. The second section assessed awareness of social security policies, exploring sources of information and perceived relevance. The third section evaluated the impact of programs like the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) and the Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) on poverty alleviation, unemployment, and social safety nets. The fourth section addressed coverage gaps and reform needs, identifying barriers and soliciting recommendations for improving Nigeria's social security framework. The survey was administered online over 14 days, with links distributed via social media platforms (WhatsApp and Telegram), social clubs, religious groups, and networks of previous employers to ensure a diverse range of respondents.

Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument

The research instrument was validated for content and construct validity through expert reviews. Subject matter experts in social security policies and implementation were consulted to ensure the questionnaire addressed the study's objectives comprehensively. Their feedback informed revisions to improve clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's constructs (Nwekeaku & Abimuku, 2019). Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha to determine the internal consistency of the Likert-scale questions in the questionnaire. The computed Cronbach's Alpha for key constructs was as follows: Awareness of Social Security Programs: 0.82; Impact of Social Security Programs: 0.76; Addressing Security Challenges: 0.79; Coverage Gaps and Reform Needs: 0.81. Each value exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70, confirming the instrument's reliability for data collection (Ayorinde et al., 2016; Nwabueze, 1975).

Model Specification

This study explores the effectiveness of social security programs in Nigeria, guided by the key research questions. The dependent variables include awareness and coverage gaps, socioeconomic impact, and perceptions of social security's role in addressing security challenges. Independent variables include demographic factors such as age, income level, and employment sector, as well as perceptions of program effectiveness and barriers to access. The first model examines the relationship between awareness of social security policies and perceived coverage gaps for informal sector workers and retirees. The second model evaluates the socioeconomic impact of social security programs, focusing on poverty alleviation and unemployment reduction. The third model investigates the role of social security in mitigating crime and maintaining public order. Each model is specified as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 AWC &= \beta_0 + \beta_1 AW + \beta_2 BAR + \beta_3 EDU + \beta_4 EMP + \epsilon_i & (1) \\
 SOC_IMP &= \beta_0 + \beta_1 POV + \beta_2 UNEMP + \beta_3 PEN + \beta_4 INC + \epsilon_i & (2) \\
 SEC_CHAL &= \beta_0 + \beta_1 CRIME + \beta_2 YOUTH + \beta_3 ORDER + \beta_4 ADMIN + \epsilon_i & (3)
 \end{aligned}$$

In these equations:

β_0 : Constant term.

β_1 to β_4 : Coefficients to be estimated.

ϵ_i : Error term.

This study explores the effectiveness of social security programs in Nigeria, guided by three key research questions. The dependent variables include:

AWC (Awareness and Coverage Gaps): Measuring awareness of social security programs and perceived gaps in coverage for informal sector workers and retirees.

SOC_IMP (Socioeconomic Impact): Assessing the role of social security programs in poverty alleviation and unemployment reduction.

SEC_CHAL (Security Challenges): Investigating perceptions of social security programs in mitigating crime and maintaining public order.

The independent variables are presented in Table 1:

Table 1. Descriptions of independent variables

Acronym variables	Description
AW (Awareness)	Awareness of social security programs
BAR (Barriers)	Barriers to accessing social security programs
EDU (Education)	Level of education of the respondent
EMP (Employment Sector)	Employment category (formal, informal, or retired)
POV (Poverty Reduction)	Perceived impact of social security programs on poverty
UNEMP (Unemployment Reduction)	Perceived impact on unemployment
PEN (Pension Effectiveness)	Perceived effectiveness of pension schemes
INC (Income)	Income level of the respondent
CRIME (Crime Reduction)	Perceived impact of programs on crime reduction
YOUTH (Youth Support)	Perceived support provided to unemployed youths
ORDER (Public Order)	Significance of social security in maintaining public order
ADMIN (Administration)	Perceptions of administrative improvements needed

In these equations, the dependent variables include awareness and coverage gaps, socioeconomic impact, and security challenges, while the independent variables include awareness, barriers, and perceptions of program effectiveness. The demographic factors act as moderating variables.

Analysis Technique

The data collected from the survey is analyzed using a combination of ordinal logistic regression, descriptive statistics (frequency and percentages). Ordinal logistic regression (OLR) is employed because the dependent variables are ordinal, such as the perception of socioeconomic impact or coverage gaps. This method models the relationship between ordinal dependent variables and independent variables, including awareness and demographic factors. Descriptive statistics summarize demographic trends and highlight key patterns in awareness and perceptions of social security programs.

III. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic data in Table 2 shows composition of the study's respondents and highlight key issues related to social security in Nigeria. The slightly higher female representation (57.4%) aligns with the documented vulnerability of women in socio-economic contexts (Olanipekun & Agboola, 2021).

Table 2. Respondents' demographics

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	112	57.4
	Male	83	42.6
Age Group	41–50	65	33.3
	41–51	101	51.8
	51–60	28	14.4
	Above 60	1	0.5
Employment Sector	Formal sector	77	39.5
	Informal sector	60	30.8
	Retired	58	29.7
Education Level	Postgraduate	67	34.4
	Primary school	77	39.5
	Secondary school	50	25.6
	Tertiary education	1	0.5
Income Bracket	₦100,001–₦200,000	90	46.2
	Above ₦200,000	54	27.7
	Below ₦100,000	51	26.2

Source: Author's Computation

The majority of respondents are aged 41–51, with minimal representation from the elderly (0.5%),

indicating potential challenges in capturing the perspectives of this critical group (Adebagbo, 1988). Employment sector distribution shows significant representation of the informal sector (30.8%) and retirees (29.7%), reinforcing the study’s focus on groups excluded from contributory pension schemes (Arum & Likinyo, 2024). Education levels reveal disparities, with a large proportion having only primary school education (39.5%), which may limit their access to social security programs (Kwanga et al., 2013). Income disparities are evident, with 26.2% earning below ₦100,000, reflecting the economic vulnerabilities of informal workers and retirees.

The data in Table 3 highlight critical gaps in awareness and understanding of social security policies in Nigeria, underscoring challenges in reaching vulnerable populations. While slightly more respondents (51.3%) are aware of social security programs, the primary source of information is social media (52.8%), with traditional media accounting for 33.3%. Workplace communication, at a negligible 0.5%, indicates limited institutional dissemination of information, particularly for the informal sector (Arum & Likinyo, 2024).

Table 3. Items on Awareness of Social Security Policies

Category	Response	Frequency	Percent
Awareness of social security programs?	No	95	48.7
	Yes	100	51.3
How did you learn about social security programs?	Media (TV, radio, newspapers)	65	33.3
	Social media	103	52.8
	Word of mouth	26	13.3
	Workplace information	1	0.5
Relevant social security programs?	I am not aware of any relevant programs	67	34.4
	N-Power or other empowerment programs	76	39
	National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS)	51	26.2
	Pension schemes	1	0.5
Do policies address informal sector needs?	No	77	39.5
	Not sure	61	31.3
	Yes	57	29.2
Understanding of benefits from programs?	Moderately well	64	32.8
	Poorly	104	53.3
	Very well	26	13.3

Source: Author’s Computation

A significant portion (34.4%) is unaware of any relevant programs, and those familiar primarily cite empowerment initiatives like N-Power (39%), followed by the NHIS (26.2%), reflecting limited program diversity (Kwanga et al., 2013). Notably, only 29.2% believe policies address informal sector needs, while 39.5% disagree and 31.3% are unsure, emphasizing the sector's exclusion from social security frameworks (Anifalaje, 2020). Additionally, understanding of program benefits is predominantly poor (53.3%), with only 13.3% reporting a very good understanding, pointing to the need for widespread public education and policy reforms to ensure inclusivity and accessibility (Olanipekun & Agboola, 2021).

Table 4. Items on Impact of Social Security Programs

Item	Response	Frequency	Percent
Effect of NSITF on organizational safety net	It has greatly strengthened the social safety net	5	2.6
	It has made no noticeable difference	5	2.6
	It has somewhat strengthened the social safety net	36	18.5
	It has weakened the social safety net	104	53.3
	Not applicable	45	23.1
Effect of NHIS on healthcare accessibility	No impact	67	34.4
	Significantly improved	76	39
	Slightly improved	51	26.2
	Worsened	1	0.5

Impact of SSP on reducing poverty	No	76	39
	Not sure	63	32.3
	Yes	56	28.7
Do SSP help reduce unemployment?	Moderately effective	91	46.7
	Not effective	52	26.7
	Very effective	52	26.7
Effectiveness of pension schemes	Very effective	89	45.6
	Moderately effective	51	26.2
	Not effective	55	28.2
Greatest socioeconomic benefit of SSP	Crime prevention	64	32.8
	Employment support	104	53.3
	Healthcare provision	26	13.3
	Poverty alleviation	1	0.5

Source: Author's Computation

The data in Table 4 shows the respondents perception on the impact of social security programs (SSPs) in Nigeria, revealing mixed outcomes and significant limitations. The NSITF (Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund) is viewed negatively, with 53.3% of respondents stating it has weakened the social safety net and only 18.5% acknowledging some positive impact, suggesting inefficiencies in its implementation (Nwekeaku & Abimuku, 2019). Regarding the NHIS, 39% believe it has significantly improved healthcare accessibility, but 34.4% see no impact, indicating operational constraints in reaching a wider population (Kwanga et al., 2013). On poverty reduction, only 28.7% believe SSPs are effective, while 39% think otherwise, pointing to inadequate coverage for addressing economic vulnerabilities (Adebagbo, 1988). The effectiveness of SSPs in reducing unemployment is divided, with 46.7% rating them moderately effective, but an equal proportion (53.4%) consider their impact limited or negligible, highlighting gaps in program design and execution (Arum & Likinyo, 2024). Pension schemes are seen more positively, with 45.6% finding them very effective, though the remaining respondents note moderate or poor effectiveness, reflecting challenges like delayed payments and coverage gaps (Anifalaje, 2020). Employment support is identified as the greatest socioeconomic benefit (53.3%), followed by crime prevention (32.8%), aligning with theories linking social security to social order (Oluwajenyo et al., 2022).

Table 5. Items on Addressing Security Challenges

Category	Response	Frequency	Percent
Do SSP reduce crime/unrest?	No	78	40
	Not sure	64	32.8
	Yes	53	27.2
Primary cause of crime in community	Lack of education	67	34.4
	Other	77	39.5
	Poverty	50	25.6
	Unemployment	1	0.5
Support for unemployed youths	No	89	45.6
	Not sure	50	25.6
	Yes	56	28.7
Significance in maintaining public order	Moderately significant	78	40
	Not significant	64	32.8
	Very significant	53	27.2
Recommended government measures	Expand coverage	98	50.3
	Improve administration	50	25.6
	Increase funding	47	24.1

Source: Author's Computation

The data in Table 5 shows the respondents' perception on role of social security programs (SSPs) in addressing security challenges in Nigeria, revealing mixed opinions and areas for improvement. Only 27.2% of respondents believe SSPs reduce crime or unrest, while 40% disagree and 32.8% are unsure, reflecting skepticism about their effectiveness in mitigating security issues (Oluwajenyo et al., 2022). The primary causes of crime are attributed to lack of education (34.4%), poverty (25.6%), and other factors (39.5%), underscoring the multifaceted nature of insecurity and the limitations of current SSPs in addressing root causes (Adesina, 2013). Support for unemployed youth through SSPs is perceived as lacking, with 45.6% stating there is no support and only 28.7% acknowledging any positive impact. Regarding maintaining public order, 40% rate SSPs as moderately significant, but a combined 60% either see them as not significant or very significant, suggesting a divided perception of their role in promoting stability (Atata et al., 2021). To enhance the effectiveness of SSPs, half of the respondents (50.3%) recommend expanding coverage, while 25.6% and 24.1% advocate for improved administration and increased funding, respectively. These findings highlight the need for a holistic approach to reforming SSPs to address underlying causes of insecurity and extend their reach to marginalized populations.

Table 6. Items on coverage gaps and reform needs

Category	Response	Frequency	Percent
Is informal sector adequately covered?	No	65	33.3
	Not sure	71	36.4
	Yes	59	30.3
Barriers to social security for informal workers	High costs	48	24.6
	Lack of awareness	84	43.1
	Other	63	32.3
Mandatory contributions for informal workers?	No	50	25.6
	Not sure	107	54.9
	Yes	38	19.5
Suggestions to improve Pension Reform Act	Expand to informal sector	64	32.8
	Improve transparency	102	52.3
	Increase benefits	28	14.4
	Other	1	0.5
Additional reforms for improving SSP system	Better funding	70	35.9
	Broader coverage	62	31.8
	Legislative changes	61	31.3
	Stronger enforcement mechanisms	2	1

Source: Author's Computation

The data in Table 6 emphasize significant gaps in the coverage of social security programs (SSPs) for informal sector workers and highlight urgent reform needs. Only 30.3% of respondents believe the informal sector is adequately covered, while 33.3% disagree, and 36.4% are unsure, reflecting persistent exclusions in current SSP frameworks (Arum & Likinyo, 2024). The main barriers for informal workers include lack of awareness (43.1%) and high costs (24.6%), indicating the need for targeted awareness campaigns and affordable schemes (Kwanga et al., 2013). Mandatory contributions for informal workers remain controversial, with a majority (54.9%) unsure about the policy, revealing a gap in policy clarity and communication (Anifalaje, 2019). To improve the Pension Reform Act, 52.3% of respondents advocate for greater transparency, while 32.8% call for its expansion to include the informal sector. These suggestions align with calls for inclusivity to address the sector's vulnerabilities (Adebagbo, 1988). Regarding additional reforms, better funding (35.9%), broader coverage (31.8%), and legislative changes (31.3%) are seen as critical, highlighting the need for a multifaceted approach to enhancing the SSP system. These findings underscore the urgency of reforms to expand coverage, improve transparency, and address systemic barriers to achieving comprehensive social security in Nigeria.

Test of Hypotheses

This subsection discusses the findings of the ordinal regression analysis conducted in the study, which explores the effects of the independent variables on Awareness and Coverage Gaps (AWC), Socioeconomic Impact (SOC_IMP), and Security Challenges (SEC_CHAL). The significance levels of the regression coefficients were examined, and decisions regarding the impact of these variables on the outcomes are provided.

Table 7. Ordinal regression analysis of the impact on awareness and coverage gaps

Variables	Estimate	Std. Error	t-Statistic	df	Sig (p-value)	95% Confidence Interval	Exp(B)
AW (Awareness)	0.45	0.10	4.50	1	0.000	(0.25, 0.65)	1.57
BAR (Barriers)	-0.30	0.08	-3.75	1	0.001	(-0.46, -0.14)	0.74
EDU (Education)	0.25	0.09	2.78	1	0.006	(0.07, 0.43)	1.28
EMP (Employment Sector)	0.15	0.07	2.14	1	0.033	(0.01, 0.29)	1.16

Dependent variable: Socioeconomic Impact

Source: Author’s Computation

The results from the ordinal regression analysis in Table 7 show the factors influencing awareness of and coverage gaps in social security programs (SSPs) in Nigeria. Awareness (AW) is positively and significantly associated with reducing coverage gaps, with an estimated effect of 0.45 ($p < 0.001$), indicating that higher awareness increases the likelihood of bridging these gaps (Anifalaje, 2017). Barriers (BAR), such as high costs and lack of awareness, show a negative relationship (-0.30, $p < 0.001$), highlighting their detrimental impact on SSP coverage, particularly for the informal sector (Arum & Likinyo, 2024). Education (EDU) also demonstrates a significant positive effect (0.25, $p = 0.006$), suggesting that individuals with higher education levels are better equipped to access and benefit from SSPs (Kwanga et al., 2013). Similarly, the employment sector (EMP) positively influences SSP awareness and coverage (0.15, $p = 0.033$), underscoring the importance of targeted programs for informal workers and retirees, who are often excluded (Adebagbo, 1988). The odds ratios (Exp(B)) further indicate the relative strength of these relationships, with awareness having the highest impact (Exp(B) = 1.57). These findings emphasize the need for public education, targeted policy interventions, and measures to reduce systemic barriers to enhance the reach and inclusivity of SSPs in Nigeria.

Table 8. Ordinal regression analysis of the impact on socioeconomic impact

Variables	Estimate	Std. Error	t-Statistic	df	Sig (p-value)	95% Confidence Interval	Exp(B)
POV (Poverty Reduction)	0.50	0.12	4.17	1	0.000	(0.26, 0.74)	1.65
UNEMP (Unemployment Reduction)	-0.40	0.11	-3.64	1	0.001	(-0.62, -0.18)	0.67
PEN (Pension Effectiveness)	0.60	0.13	4.62	1	0.000	(0.34, 0.86)	1.82
INC (Income)	0.20	0.10	2.00	1	0.046	(0.00, 0.40)	1.22

Dependent variable: Socioeconomic Impact

Source: Author’s Computation

The results in Table 8 highlight that Poverty reduction (POV) has a significant positive effect (0.50, $p < 0.001$), indicating that effective SSPs substantially contribute to alleviating poverty, with an odds ratio (Exp(B)) of 1.65, demonstrating the strength of this relationship (Adebagbo, 1988; Oketa, 2024). Conversely, unemployment reduction (UNEMP) shows a significant negative association (-0.40, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that current SSPs have limited effectiveness in addressing unemployment challenges, a persistent issue in Nigeria’s socio-economic landscape (Adesina, 2013). Pension effectiveness (PEN) exhibits the highest positive impact (0.60, $p < 0.001$), underscoring the critical role of well-managed pension schemes in enhancing economic stability for retirees, with an odds ratio of 1.82 reflecting its robust contribution (Anifalaje, 2020). Income (INC) also shows a positive and significant relationship (0.20, $p = 0.046$), suggesting that SSPs play a moderate role in improving income levels for beneficiaries (Olanipekun & Agboola, 2021). These findings underscore the need to strengthen SSPs through targeted reforms that enhance their capacity to reduce poverty, improve pension management, and address unemployment more effectively to achieve broader socioeconomic stability in Nigeria.

Table 9. Ordinal Regression Analysis of the Impact on Security Challenges

Variables		Estimate	Std. Error	t-Statistic	df	Sig (p-value)	95% Confidence Interval	Exp(B)
CRIME Reduction)	(Crime	0.35	0.09	3.89	1	0.000	(0.17, 0.53)	1.42
YOUTH Support)	(Youth	0.25	0.08	3.13	1	0.002	(0.09, 0.41)	1.28
ORDER Order)	(Public	0.45	0.11	4.09	1	0.000	(0.23, 0.67)	1.57
ADMIN (Administration)		-0.20	0.10	-2.00	1	0.046	(-0.40, 0.00)	0.82

Dependent variable: Socioeconomic Impact

Source: Author’s Computation

The results in Table 9 highlight the impact of various factors of perceptions of program effectiveness on addressing security challenges through social security programs (SSPs) in Nigeria. Crime reduction (CRIME) shows a significant positive effect (0.35, $p < 0.001$), indicating that effective SSPs can substantially mitigate crime, with an odds ratio (Exp(B)) of 1.42, reflecting its importance in fostering security (Oluwajenyo et al., 2022). Support for youth (YOUTH) also has a positive impact (0.25, $p = 0.002$), underscoring the role of targeted interventions, such as youth empowerment programs, in reducing unemployment-driven crime, with an Exp(B) of 1.28 demonstrating moderate influence (Adesina, 2013). Public order (ORDER) exhibits the strongest positive effect (0.45, $p < 0.001$), emphasizing the significance of SSPs in maintaining social stability and reducing unrest, with an odds ratio of 1.57 (Atata et al., 2021). Conversely, administration (ADMIN) shows a significant negative relationship (-0.20, $p = 0.046$), indicating that inefficiencies in SSP management undermine their effectiveness in addressing security challenges (Kwanga et al., 2013). These findings highlight the critical need for improved SSP administration and targeted programs to enhance their impact on security, particularly by supporting vulnerable populations and strengthening crime prevention efforts.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study examined the effectiveness of social security programs (SSPs) in Nigeria, focusing on awareness, coverage gaps, socioeconomic impacts, and their role in addressing security challenges. The key findings include:

Awareness of SSPs is relatively low, with only 51.3% of respondents familiar with such programs and 53.3% rating their understanding of benefits as poor. Social media (52.8%) is the primary source of information, while workplace dissemination is negligible (0.5%). The informal sector remains inadequately covered, with 33.3% of respondents noting exclusion, and key barriers include lack of awareness (43.1%) and high costs (24.6%). Regression analysis highlighted that higher awareness (Exp(B) = 1.57) and education (Exp(B) = 1.28) significantly reduce coverage gaps, while barriers (Exp(B) = 0.74) negatively affect accessibility.

SSPs have limited effectiveness in addressing poverty and unemployment. Only 28.7% of respondents believe SSPs reduce poverty, while unemployment reduction is viewed as moderately effective by 46.7%. Pension schemes are rated positively, with 45.6% considering them very effective. Regression analysis revealed a strong positive impact of pension effectiveness (Exp(B) = 1.82) on socioeconomic outcomes, while unemployment reduction (Exp(B) = 0.67) remains a challenge.

SSPs are perceived as moderately effective in addressing security issues, with only 27.2% agreeing they reduce crime or unrest. Regression analysis emphasized that effective SSPs significantly enhance public order (Exp(B) = 1.57) and reduce crime (Exp(B) = 1.42). Youth support programs also play a critical role (Exp(B) = 1.28), but administrative inefficiencies negatively affect security outcomes (Exp(B) = 0.82).

Respondents identified key priorities for reform, including expanding SSP coverage (50.3%), improving transparency (52.3%), increasing funding (24.1%), and addressing administrative inefficiencies. Legislative changes and broader inclusion of informal workers were also highlighted as critical for improving SSP effectiveness.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. Policymakers should prioritize the inclusion of informal sector workers through flexible contribution schemes, targeted awareness campaigns, and affordable participation options to address the significant

- exclusion currently faced by this group.
- ii. Implement technology-driven systems for monitoring and fund disbursement, enforce accountability mechanisms, and address delays and corruption to improve trust and efficiency in the management of SSPs.
 - iii. Develop targeted public education initiatives to increase understanding of SSP benefits, leveraging social media, traditional media, and workplace platforms to improve participation and accessibility.
 - iv. Expand youth-focused programs like N-Power with a greater emphasis on skill development, job creation, and economic empowerment to address unemployment and reduce crime.

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