



The Influence of National Youth Service Corps Entrepreneurship Skill Acquisition Programmes on Youthempowermentin Rivers State

Deebom, MtormaBari TamBari^{1*}, Daerego, Ilomabo Taylor²

Department of Vocational and Technology Education Rivers State University, Port Harcourt

Department of Adult Education and Community Development Rivers State University, Port Harcourt

***Corresponding Author:** *Deebom, MtormaBari TamBari, Department of Vocational and Technology Education Rivers State University, Port Harcourt*

Abstract: *The study examines the influence of National Youth Service Corps Entrepreneurship Skill Acquisition programmes on youth empowerment in Rivers State. Three research questions were answered with two null hypotheses that were formulated and tested at 0.05 significance level. The population of the study was all NYSC Officials and Corps Members of Batch “B” 2019. Corps Members were purposively sampled using the snowball sampling technique to select 241 NYSC Batch “B” members while simple random was used to select 28 NYSC Officials in Rivers State. Therefore, the total sample size for the study was 269. The instrument for data collection was a self-constructed questionnaire titled “Skill Acquisition Entrepreneurship Development Questionnaire” (SAEDQ). The instrument was designed in checklist format and 4-point rating scale which was subjected to face and content validity by two NYSC Officials from Rivers State NYSC secretariat Port Harcourt. The spilt-half method was employed to compute the reliability. Kuder-Richardson (KR-20) was used calculate the reliability of section A while Cronbach Alpha was used to calculate section B and C respectively. Reliability coefficients of 0.86, 0.84 and 0.80 were established for Section A, B and C respectively with an overall reliability coefficient (?) of 0.83 was established for the instrument. Out of 269 copies of the instrument that was administered, 253 were successfully retrieved and used for analysis. Research question 1 was answered with frequency and percentage while research question 2 and 3 were answered using mean with standard deviation. Hypotheses were tested z-test. The study found that skills listed were available in NYSC-SAED programme for acquisition for youth empowerment. The study also found that NYSC-SAED programmes are faced with challenges. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that more skills should be added by relevant authorities such as government so that individual will have a wider choice of skills. Corps Members should be aware of the relevance of participating in NYSC-SAED programme as this will expose them to opportunities that will help in making them self-employed thereby reducing unemployment level in Nigeria and that there should be an effective follow-up channel through monitoring and supervision of beneficiaries of the grants/loans.*

Key words: *Empowerment, Youth, Skill Acquisition, NYSC, SAED*

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the years in Nigeria and other parts of the world, different programmes have been introduced to serve and tackle a particular situation. The programme could be to curb insecurity, enhance food production, reducing unemployment among others, Also, these programmes were targeted towards a particular set of people such as the adolescent, youths, adults, the elderly, educated, the non-educated and even the physically challenged people. One of such programmes that were introduced targeting the youths is the National Youth Service Corps. The National Youth Service Corps popularly known and called “NYSC” is a Nigerian organization which was established by the Nigerian government to engage fresh Nigerian graduates of tertiary institutions in national development. According to Agumagu, Adesope and Mathews-Njoku (2006), the National Youth Service Corps is a programme meant for graduates of tertiary institutions to serve the nation for one year as a way of integrating them into other geographical region in the country. This was done as a way of promoting national unity.

Maduawuchi (2019) opined that during the early year after Nigeria gained independence from the Great Britain, the country was filled with so much strife and tribal segregation that the Nigerian

government of that time sought to foster peace and unity among Nigerian, starting with the youths through a programme that removed cultural and geographical bias. After the Nigerian-Biafran War that took place between 1963-1970, the Federal Military government under the military leadership of General Yakubu Gowon set out to rebuild Nigeria through a programme which was known as the 3R's – Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation. This programme of 3R's helped to set up the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) on May 22, 1973 through Decree No. 24. The aim of introducing NYSC according to Decree No. 24 was to developed communities and promote national peace for coexistence through the youths (NYSC Handbook, 1996). With these aims and objectives, it was categorically stated in the decree that all graduates from tertiary institutions such as Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education should be posted to other states within the country (Nigeria) to serve their father land in form of a national assignment. The posting was such that graduate must not be allowed to serve in their own biological state of origin (Ogundele, Sofoluwe&Kayode, 2012). Based on this purpose, each state of the federation has its own place to accommodate these graduates for this exercise which is regarded as "Orientation Camp". They spent three weeks in this camp where they are exposed to paramilitary exercised or training to keep them physically fit and viable for the national service year. These trainings are handled by soldiers (Army). One of the major exercises participated by corps member is the "Endurance Trek" where you are allowed to trek over a long distance. The aim of this was to make the individual fit to be able to trek most at times where there is no transport allowance or to reduce excess spending. At the end of these trainings in the orientation camp, they are posted to different places or sectors within the states to carry out their primary assignment where they stay and work for the remaining part of the service year. Some of the sectors or places they are posted to include educational institutions (Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education among others), banks, judiciary, industries, hospitals, state and federal secretariat, Local Government Councils and so on. The service year end up with a Passing Out Parade (POP) where and when each corps member is duly qualified and certify to be issued a certificate of completion of the compulsory national service year. The rationale of the Federal Government then was to post the fresh graduates as corps members to serve in a new state or community, so that they would be able to interact with the members of the new community, acculturate their ways of life, make friend and even marry. As such, there will be cultural integration; the problem of tribalism will reduce and the problems associated with the disunity would be adequately eliminated.

However, the objectives of NYSC as promulgated by Decree N0 51 of 16th June, 1973, a month after the scheme was introduced is as follows:

- To build discipline in Nigerian youths by imparting in them a practice of industry at work, and of nationalistic and dependable service to Nigeria in any situation they may find themselves.
- To promote the moral quality of the Nigerian youths by giving them the chance to acquire about advanced ideals of general accomplishment, social and cultural enhancement.
- To change in the Nigerian youths the attitudes of mind, acquired through collective involvement and appropriate exercise which will make them more willing to deployment in the nationwide interest.
- To allow Nigerian youths acquire the spirit of independence by inspiring them to acquire skills for self-employment.
- To contribute towards enhancement growth of the country's economy.
- To build a public tie among the Nigerian youths that encourages national unity and integration.
- To eliminate biases, eradicate illiteracy and check at first hand the many similarities among Nigerians of all ethnic groups,
- To cultivate an idea of co-existence and having common purpose of the people of Nigeria.
- The unbiased distribution of members of the service corps and the effective utilization of their skills in area of national needs.
- That as far as possible, youths are assigned to jobs in States other than their States of origin.
- That such group of youths assigned to work together is as representative of Nigeria as far as possible.
- That the Nigerian youths are exposed to the different methods of living adopted by different in different parts of Nigeria.

- That the Nigerian youths are also advised to avoid religious fanaticism by accommodating religious differences.
- That members of the service corps are expected and encouraged to seek at the end of their one-year national service, career employment all over Nigeria, thus promoting the free movement of labour.
- That employers are induced partly through their experience with members of the service corps to employ more readily and on a permanent basis, qualified Nigerians, irrespective of their States of origin.

According to Onyishi (2011), the goal of the scheme includes to develop youths especially graduates with sound mind and result oriented that are driving towards the actualization of national cohesion and unity and to incorporate national coexistence. It is an exercise that developed the individual minds and make them bring out their best for service for national development and nation building. According to Okafor and Ani (2014), the national assignment builds best characteristics in the young and giving the correct mentality and incentive for country fabricating that fills in as an impetus to national turn of events and a feeling of pride and satisfaction of it taking part graduate adolescents. However, due to the enormous challenges such as underemployment and unemployment confronting Nigeria, other responsibilities have been put on the scheme. Due to the problem of unemployment of graduates bedeviling the country, in 2012, the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced a training programme in to the NYSC known as the Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) project. The aim of the programme was for acquisition of skills for graduate self-reliance. This was used to tackle the issue of unemployment and underemployment of graduates. The Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) project has its mandate of providing youth corps members open access to acquisition of vital and essential skills and resources necessary to be successful in entrepreneurship. The goals of the scheme include creating awareness of young graduates who are corps members for acquisition of basic skill training for entrepreneurship development and self-reliance. The Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) as a Department in NYSC is headed by a Director and is made up of two divisions namely: Skills Acquisition Division and Entrepreneurship and Empowerment Division. These two departments are saddled with the responsibilities of:

- Given orientation and trained over 200, 000 corps members for skill acquisition yearly.
- Assist the training and tutoring of 100, 000 young graduates in skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development for self-reliance annually.
- Develop an entrepreneurship partnership aiming towards self-reliance of the youths between the private sector and the public sector as well.
- Provide new ways and methods on how best Nigerian youths' employment and empowerment are done.
- Support evidence-driven funding programmes to formulate policies that enhances youth Nigerian youths' employment and empowerment.
- Organising orientation training programmes on the importance of corps members to enrol into the skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development program.
- Development of a standard curriculum for the in-camp skill acquisition exercise.
- Identification of organizations at state level to provide training and mentoring in specific skills sets.
- Attachment of the corps members to the various organizations for skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development.
- On-going monitoring and supervision of trainee corps members and
- Facilitate access to available funding opportunities

According to Faloye and Olatunji (2018), the sole objective of SAED programmes is to encourage the Nigerians generally, and Nigeria youths particularly, to highly involve in entrepreneurial activities thereby creating jobs.

Others include enhancement of partnership between the public and the private sector for the purpose of developing skill-based development for self-reliance among Nigerian youths and graduates. In order to reduce the rate of unemployment among Nigerian number of graduates roaming about on the

street with certificate qualification without having a meaningful source of livelihood, the concept of entrepreneurial education (training) was introduced into tertiary education in Nigeria (Deebom & Baridoma, 2017). The SAED program is aimed at young people who are corps members undergoing the compulsory one-year of national service to the fatherland. The programme was structured mainly for corps members to participate only during their camping period and throughout their one-year service (post-camp). It is expected each and every corps member learn a skill that is industrially based which can position them to become job creators rather than job hunters and hence reduce the number of unemployed graduates in the country. The SAED programme that was introduced in 2012 started with 12 different categories of skills offered in this SAED program. These skills areas include Agro-allied, Automobile, Beautification, Construction, Cosmetology, Culture and Tourism, Education, Environment, Film and Photography, Food Processing/Preservation, Information Communication Technology and Power and Energy.

The SAED policy is one of the few in the country that is really helping in empowering and preparing the youths for productive engagements. According to Utomwen (2012), it was noted that at the end of the 2012 Batch "B" orientation course, 45,000 corps members had been trained in various skill areas. Out of this SAED trainee, the result revealed that 5,404 corps members had been trained in agro-allied skills while 5,509 corps members that enrol in food processing and preservation had also been successfully trained. However, 8,035 were trained in culture and tourism-related skills while just 5,062 which participated in cosmetology have completed the training. Furthermore, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), power and energy as well as environment had a total of 8,119, 2,885 and 2,672 trainees respectively. Also, in beautification, construction and education, a total number of 2,837, 2,057 and 2,425 has been trained successfully. This implies that from the inception of NYSC-SAED programme till date, not less than 971,272 corps members have benefitted from the skill acquisition programme while over 7000 have established their preferred business (This Day, February 6th 2019). In 2014, about 159,732 corps members had successfully completed the NYSC-SAED programme which comprise of 69,904 females and 89,828 males. Over 500,000 corps members have been trained under the NYSC-SAED program since its inception. Surprisingly, out of the total number of trained entrepreneurs, 1,600 had become full-time entrepreneurs (www.nyscsaed.com). These are some of the benefits of NYSC-SAED programme in promoting employment among Nigerian graduates which also usher in socio-economic development and national integration.

Annually, the programme mobilizes and prepares over two hundred and fifty thousand (250,000) youths to become employable or start-up their own businesses after completing their mandatory one-year service. The sole objective of these programmes is to encourage the Nigerians generally, and Nigeria youths particularly, to highly involve in skill acquisition for creating jobs. Skills are the proficiency, expertise and ability to acquire a type of craft requiring specialist training. Osinem (2008) described skill as a well-established habit of doing something expertly. However, in this context, skill could be described as the ability of Corps Members to be able to carry out a specialized area in entrepreneurial trade expertly for self-reliance. To this end, it will not be an overstatement to say skills acquisition is a programme made up of various kinds of skills to provide basic and special training/skills and capacity building/empowerment for the upliftment and well-being of an individual or a people (Adofu, 2013). When the youths acquire skills, it will lead to self-reliance and reduce the level of unemployment. For skill acquisition training programme to have an impact on the society, Deebom and Okwelle (2015) aver that skill acquisition should be tailored and directed towards the youths as they are seen as the frontline for development both rural and urban. This is not very surprising given the fact that they (youth) form a great portion of the entire population. Youths at times are referred to as young people. Youth is an age of adventure; it is a bridge between the adolescent and the adults or old age (Akande, 2011). The National Population Commission (cited in Odunwole, 2015) defines youth as people between the ages of 18-35 years. This definition is in tune with NYSC benchmark that the national service year is between the ages of 18 – 30. Based on this benchmark, it can be categorically stated that Corps Members are classified as youth and hence, they are set of population that suffers high rate of unemployment. Unemployment is a state of joblessness, being out of job or not being gainfully employed. The state of being employed or self-employed makes the youth to be economically viable. Therefore, youth empowerment according to Jimba (2006) are methods and modalities adopted with the aim of

facilitating and to cause a positive change in their lifestyle. It was further maintained that youth empowerment means a way of building in to the youth the idea of transformation of knowledge and skills into innovativeness and creativity. Youth empowerment can also be seen as a process of developing exposing the youth through acquisition skills to make them productive and can contribute meaningfully to the society. It encompasses different ways youth can be exposed into different craft and vocation that may help them to engage in sustainable paid and self-employment.

The concept, empowerment as defined by World Bank (2011), is the process of developing the individuals (youths) capacity and capability to be able to make choices and to convert their decisions and thoughts into desired actions and outcomes. This definition views youths' empowerment from the perspective of human capacity building which targets how to make an individual or youths to be self-employed, self-independent or self-reliant. Also, Okwelle and Deebom (2017) stressed that empowerment could be seen as a process of molding an individual (youths) with the required skill necessary for its economic, financial, social, moral and psychological existence and development to enhance self-reliance individually and the society at large. In this study, empowerment is defined as the process of training the youths (Corp Members) for them to acquire different skills that can make them to be self-employed and to employ others. Based on this definition, it implies that meaningful skill acquisition programmes like that of SAED should incorporate the youth for their empowerment. From the foregoing, the National Youth Service Corps Service Skill Acquisition Entrepreneurship Development programme will only be meaningful if it influences the youth in ways of empowerment especially in Rivers State.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Nigeria is confronted with the issue of insecurity as evident in the high rate of killing, kidnapping, robbery, cultism among others. In Nigeria today, there is an increasing rate of poverty, unemployment and other social problems that have bedeviled the Nigerian society and the youth in particular which Deebom and Okwelle (2016) affirmed that these may have resulted from the lack of appropriate skill acquisition by graduates and the youths in general. To argue these predominant features of poverty, unemployment and social vices in Nigeria, the Transparency International ranked Nigeria as the top most corrupt nation in the world and with the worst index of human suffering. Also, the unemployment level in Nigeria has persistently been on an increase level. As at April, 2018, the unemployment rate in Nigeria is 18.80%. This figure is relatively high if compared with countries like India (3.4%), Mexico (3.20%), Indonesia (5.50%), Turkey (10.40%), and Brazil (12.60%) (Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics, 2017). In order to resolve this, the federal government has introduced several modalities which include the introduction of entrepreneurship skill acquisition programmes in the NYSC scheme to help engage graduates with skills that will enable them become entrepreneurs after service thereby reducing the rate of unemployment. Unfortunately, ever since this programme was introduced, the rate of unemployment has not reduced. Ehirheme and Ekpenyong (2012) observed that most of the Nigerian graduates upon completion of the compulsory one-year national service still remain jobless after 5 years thereby causing an increase in the unemployment rate and the society at large. However, if the aim of the entrepreneurship skills introduced in the NYSC scheme is to check unemployment in the country, it means that the unemployment rate ought to have dropped but Nigeria is still witnessing an increase in the unemployment rate. It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the influence of National Youth Service Corps Entrepreneurship Skill Acquisition programmes on youth empowerment in Rivers State.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to examine the influence of National Youth Service Corps Entrepreneurship Skill Acquisition programmes on youth empowerment in Rivers State. Objectively, the study sought to achieve the following.

1. Identify the skills available for acquisition by Corps Members for youth empowerment in Rivers State.
2. Examine the benefits of skill acquisition by Corps Members for youth empowerment in Rivers State.
3. Find out the challenges facing the acquisition of skills by Corps Members in Rivers State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions were answer to guide the study,

1. What are the skills available for acquisition by Corps Members for youth empowerment in Rivers State?
2. What are the benefits of skill acquisition by Corps Members for youth empowerment in Rivers State?
3. What are the challenges facing the acquisition of skills by Corps Members in Rivers State?

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference in the mean response of Corps Members and NYSC Officials on the benefits of skill acquisition by Corps Members for youth empowerment in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean response of Corps Members and NYSC Officials on the challenges facing acquisition of skills by Corps Members for youth empowerment in Rivers State.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive research survey design. The study was conducted in Rivers State. The population of the study was all NYSC Officials and Corps Members of Batch “B” 2019. The choice of Batch “B” NYSC members is based on the fact that Batch “B” members have spent more time on the scheme than other batches and still actively in service than Batch “A” as such they were readily available to give information on NYSC entrepreneurship skills acquisition programme. Corps Members were purposively sampled using the snowball sampling technique to select 241 NYSC Batch “B” members while simple random was used to select 28 NYSC Officials in Rivers State. Therefore, the total sample size for the study was 269. The instrument for data collection was a self-constructed questionnaire titled “Skill Acquisition Entrepreneurship Development Questionnaire” (SAEDQ) which was divided into two main parts 1 and 2 respectively. Part 1 was used to capture demographic variables of the respondents while part 2 was used to elicit information based on the objectives of the study. Section A of part 2 was structured in a checklist format while Section B and C of part 2 was designed in the pattern of 4 -point rating scale with numerical values of 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by two NYSC Officials from Rivers State NYSC secretariat Port Harcourt. The instrument was validated in reference to: wordings, sentence construction/construct, ambiguity, appropriateness and relevance. The reliability of the instrument was established using 16Corps Members and 7 NYSC Officials who were part of the population but were not among the sampled group. The spilt-half method was employed to compute the reliability. Kuder-Richardson (KR-20) was used calculate the reliability of section A while Cronbach Alpha was used to calculate section B and C respectively. Reliability coefficients of 0.86, 0.84 and 0.80 were established for Section A, B and C respectively with an overall reliability coefficient (γ) of 0.83 was established for the instrument. Out of 269 copies of the instrument that was administered, 253 were successfully retrieved and used for analysis. Research question 1 was answered with frequency and percentage while research question 2 and 3 were answered using mean with standard deviation. Any item with mean value equal to or greater 2.50 was considered agreed while item having mean value less than 2.50 was regarded as disagree. Hypotheses were tested z-test. If the calculated value of z (zcal) is less or equal to the critical value of z (zcrit), the null hypothesis was accepted otherwise, reject.

3. RESULTS

The results from the study are shown below.

Research Question 1: What are the skills available for acquisition by Corps Members for youth empowerment in Rivers State?

Table1. Frequency and Percentage Response on Skills Available in NYSC-SAED Programmes

S/N	Entrepreneurial Skills	NYSC Officials Freq %	Corps Members Freq %
-----	------------------------	-------------------------------------	------------------------------------

The Influence of National Youth Service Corps Entrepreneurship Skill Acquisition Programmes on Youthempowermentin Rivers State

1	Snail Production	28	100.00	225	100.00
2	Cat Fish Production	28	100.00	225	100.00
3	Broilers Production	28	100.00	225	100.00
4	Layers/Egg Production	28	100.00	225	100.00
5	Processing/Making of Poultry Products	28	100.00	225	100.00
6	Shoe/Bag Making	28	100.00	225	100.00
7	Baking of Cake	28	100.00	225	100.00
8	Bead Making	28	100.00	225	100.00
9	Painting Making	28	100.00	225	100.00
10	Film and Photography	28	100.00	225	100.00
11	Soap Making	28	100.00	225	100.00
12	Tailoring	28	100.00	225	100.00
13	Fashion Designing	28	100.00	225	100.00
14	Hat Making	28	100.00	225	100.00
15	Tie & Die Ankara	28	100.00	225	100.00
16	Perfume Making	28	100.00	225	100.00
17	Electrical Installation	28	100.00	225	100.00
18	Solar Installation	28	100.00	225	100.00
19	Cosmetology	28	100.00	225	100.00
20	Culture and Tourism	28	100.00	225	100.00
21	Education	28	100.00	225	100.00
22	Food Processing/Preservation	28	100.00	225	100.00
23	ICT	28	100.00	225	100.00
24	GSM Repairs	28	100.00	225	100.00

Source: Researchers' Field Survey; 2019

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage response of Corps Members and NYSC Officials on National Youth Service Corps-Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (NYSC-SAED) programme available in Rivers State. The result shows that the respondents agreed that the listed skills are available in NYSC-SAED programme.

Research Question 2:What are the benefits of skill acquisition by Corps Members for youth empowerment in Rivers State?

Table2. Mean Scores on Benefits of NYSC SAED for Corps Members

S/N	Item Statement	NYSC Official			Corps Members		
		\bar{X}	SD	RMK	\bar{X}	SD	RMK
25	It reduces the rate of crime in the society.	3.44	0.92	A	3.18	0.64	A
26	It helps in the discovery of individual talents and potentials.	3.71	0.67	A	2.80	0.64	A
27	It promotes individual's creativity and innovation.	3.08	0.71	A	3.77	0.77	A
28	It reduces the level of poverty	3.50	0.69	A	3.57	0.97	A
29	It brings about economic development.	2.97	0.72	A	3.60	1.01	A
30	Increase self-esteem	3.77	0.66	A	2.98	1.05	A
31	Improve standard of living	3.62	0.84	A	3.34	0.72	A
32	It promotes unity and cooperationamong rural youths	3.10	1.01	A	3.72	0.66	A
33	Skill acquisition enhancesemployment generation	3.80	0.70	A	3.88	0.84	A
34	It improve individual talents	3.06	1.04	A	3.40	1.03	A
35	It increases the productive manpower of the society.	3.19	0.37	A	3.66	0.95	A
36	It improves youth technological strength.	2.86	0.72	A	2.98	0.72	A
37	It makes an individual to be an entrepreneur.	3.13	0.88	A	3.47	0.87	A
	Average Mean/SD	3.33	0.72	A	3.41	0.84	A

Source: Researchers' Field Survey; 2019

The Influence of National Youth Service Corps Entrepreneurship Skill Acquisition Programmes on Youthempowermentin Rivers State

Result from Table 2 revealed that all the respondents agreed that the items listed are benefits of NYSC-SAED programme for youth empowerment in Rivers State. This was shown in the mean scores of the respondents with 3.33 and 3.41 which are greater than the cut-off point of 2.50. Standard deviation values higher than 1.00 indicates that the respondents were far apart in their responses while standard deviation values less than 1.00 implies that the respondents were close in their responses.

Research Question 3:What are the challenges facing the acquisition of skills by Corps Members in Rivers State?

Table3. Mean Scores on Challenges Facing NYSC-SAED In Rivers State

S/N	Item Statement	NYSC Official			Corps Members		
		\bar{X}	SD	RMK	\bar{X}	SD	RMK
38	Inadequate number of resource persons.	3.47	0.72	A	3.72	0.75	A
39	Poor funding	3.49	0.62	A	2.98	0.94	A
40	Lack of accessibility to loan facilities.	2.88	0.92	A	3.60	0.82	A
41	Lack of follow-up with trained beneficiaries.	3.81	1.02	A	3.55	0.80	A
42	Lack of provision of post-training support to start business.	3.58	0.78	A	3.78	0.76	A
43	Lack of sponsorship upon completion.	3.71	0.86	A	3.61	0.83	A
	Average Mean/SD	3.49	0.82	A	3.54	0.82	A

Source: Researchers' Field Survey; 2019

Result from Table 3 revealed that all the respondents agreed that the items listed are facing NYSC-SAED programme for youth empowerment in Rivers State. This was shown in the mean scores of the respondents with 3.49 and 3.54 which are greater than the cut-off point of 2.50. Standard deviation values higher than 1.00 indicates that the respondents were far apart in their responses while standard deviation values less than 1.00 implies that the respondents were close in their responses.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the mean response of Corps Members and NYSC Officials on the benefits of skill acquisition by Corps Members for youth empowerment in Rivers State.

Table4. z-Test Analysis on Benefits of NYSC-SAED Programmes

Group	Mean	SD	N	df	z_{cal}	z_{crit}	Remark
NYSC Officials	3.33	0.72	28				
				251	-0.54	1.96	Accepted
Corps Members	3.41	0.84	225				

Source: Researcher's Field Result; 2019 Accept Ho if $z_{cal} < z_{crit}$; Otherwise Reject

Table 4 presents the summary of z-test analysis on the responses of NYSC Officials and Corps Members on the benefits of NYSC-SAED programme for youth empowerment in Rivers State. The result revealed that the calculated z-value of -0.54 at 251 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significant, while the critical z-value is 1.96. This implies that the calculated z-value of -0.54 is less than the critical z-value of 1.96. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of NYSC Officials and Corps Members on the benefits of NYSC-SAED programme for youth empowerment in Rivers State.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean response of Corps Members and NYSC Officials on the challenges facing acquisition of skills by Corps Members for youth empowerment in Rivers State.

Table5. z-Test Analysis on Challenges Facing NYSC-SAED Programmes

Group	Mean	SD	N	df	z_{cal}	z_{crit}	Remark
NYSC Officials	3.49	0.82	28				
				251	0.30	1.96	Accepted
Corps Members	3.54	0.82	225				

Source: Researcher's Field Result; 2019 Accept Ho if $z_{cal} < z_{crit}$; Otherwise Reject

Table 5 presents the summary of z-test analysis on the responses of NYSC Officials and Corps Members on the challenges facing NYSC-SAED programme for youth empowerment in Rivers State.

The result revealed that the calculated z-value of 0.30 at 251 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significant, while the critical z-value is 1.96. This implies that the calculated z-value of 0.30 is less than the critical z-value of 1.96. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of NYSC Officials and Corps Members on the challenges facing NYSC-SAED programme for youth empowerment in Rivers State.

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Result from Table 1 revealed that skills listed are NYSC-SAED programmes that enhance youth empowerment in Rivers State. Skills such as Snail Production, Cat Fish Production, Broilers Production, Layers/Egg Production, Fashion Designing, Hat Making, Tie & Die Ankara, Tie & Die Ankara, Perfume Making, Electrical Installation, Solar Installation, and Cosmetology among others are some of the skills available in NYSC-SAED programmes for youth empowerment in Rivers State. This finding is in line with the findings of Ekezie and Deebom (2019) who found that skills such as broiler production, pullet production, electrical installation and soap making are some of the skills in vocational Agriculture Education that can reduce unemployment among Nigerian graduates in Rivers State.

Result from Table 2 show that NYSC-SAED programmes that enhance youth empowerment in Rivers State. The study found that NYSC-SAED programmes promotes individual creativity and innovations, reduces the level of poverty, brings about economic development, improve standard of living, increase self-esteem, enhances employment generation, It increases the productive manpower of the society and also make the youths to be entrepreneurs. The findings in this study is corroboration with Ezeji and Okorie (1999) while stressing the important of skill acquisition in national growth, emphatically contended, "Nigeria social and economic problems will be drastically reduced if people are given adequate vocational training in skills, raw materials, machineries and equipment".

Result from Table 3 show that NYSC-SAED programmes are faced with challenges for youth empowerment in Rivers State. The study found that challenges facing NYSC-SAED programmes include inadequate number of resource persons, poor funding, lack of follow-up service, lack of sponsorship upon completion among others. The findings in this study is upheld by Zite and Deebom (2017) who stressed that vocational training are faced with challenges such as lack of qualified training instructors, lack of training facilities. The finding of the study also upheld that of Nnodim & Johnwest (2016) who asserted that lack of adequate facilities/infrastructure, lack of development of vocational skills, lack of fund are some factors affecting Vocational Agricultural Education implementation in Rivers State.

5. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that National Youth Service Corps-Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (NYSC-SAED) programmes are available in Rivers State that can enhance youth empowerment if they are acquired. However, the programmes (NYSC-SAED) are marred with challenges that hinder its impact on the wellbeing of the Corps Members and youths in Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that:

1. More skills should be added by relevant authorities such as government so that individual will have a wider choice of skills.
2. Corps Members should be aware of the relevance of participating in NYSC-SAED programme as this will expose them to opportunities that will help in making them self-employed thereby reducing unemployment level in Nigeria.
3. After providing the required facilities and resources by government, there should be an effective follow-up channel through monitoring and supervision of beneficiaries of the grants/loans.

REFERENCES

- [1] Adofu, I. (2013). Alleviating Poverty through the Use of Entrepreneurship Skill Acquisition in Kogi State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Independent Research and Studies*, 1(1), 97-105.
- [2] Agumagu, A.C., Adesope, O.M. & Mathew-Njoku, E. (2006). Attitude of Youth Corpers Towards the Community Development Service of National Youth Service Corp in Nigeria. *Journal of Agriculture and Social Research*, 6(1), 70-75.

