

ASSESSMENT OF PRACTICAL TEACHING DIFFICULTIES AMONG NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE CORPS (NYSC) MEMBERS SERVING AS AD-HOC TEACHERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EKPOMA, EDO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The research analyzes the practical teaching challenges faced by National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members working as ad hoc teachers in secondary schools in Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria. The survey method was used in this study. The population consists of all 86 Batch B (Stream 1 and Stream 2) corps members assigned to Ekpoma, Edo State's public secondary schools in 2022. A questionnaire created by the researcher served as the tool for gathering data. The instrument's Split-Half Reliability coefficient for classroom, environmental, and instructional-based issues was 0.75, 0.78, and 0.82, respectively. The instrument was given to aspiring instructors by the researcher and two trained research assistants. Utilizing percentages (%), means (X), and standard deviations (SD), research issues 1, 2, and 3 were examined (S.D). The findings indicated that the difficulties faced by National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) volunteers working as substitute teachers in secondary schools in Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria bordered on classroom management. These difficulties included handling students' poor seating arrangements, managing students' movement into and out of the classroom, preventing disruptive behavior in the classroom, and upholding punctuality rules. The challenges in adjusting to school are a result of the corps members' failure to follow school regulations, the normal school instructors' lack of cooperation with the corps members, and the corps members' lack of participation in extracurricular activities. Some of the instructional-based difficulties experienced by the institution's trainee instructors were student teachers' inability to appropriately use instructional resources and their anxiousness during lesson presentations in the classroom. The during the orientation exercise of corps members in the NYSC camp, it was recommended that special pre-service orientation should be given to corps members; for the purpose of pre-informing corps members on the possible challenges they are likely to face at their various school of primary assignment.

Keywords: Assessment, Corp members, NYSC, Practical Teaching Difficulties, Ad-Hoc Teachers.

1. INTRODUCTION

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme was established by the Gowon dictatorship in 1973 in the name of post-war rebuilding, rehabilitation, reconciliation, and to develop a sense of unity. According to the goals as explicitly stated in Decree No. 51 of June 16, 1993, the scheme (NYSC) was founded with a view to properly encouraging and developing relationships and promoting national unity among youth (Odeh, & Hamza, 2022). One requirement of the program is that corps members be posted to cities, villages, and countries that are far from their homes and countries of origin. In these locations, they are expected to interact with people from different tribes, social groups, and family backgrounds so that they can learn about the local culture.

Only people under 30 in Nigeria are eligible for the one-year required program. Those who qualify are sent to states other than their home states, and they often work in fields that desperately need graduate-level knowledge, such as rural farms, hospitals, and schools, to name just three. Nigeria is not unique in this. Such civil national services have been established all over the world for related reasons. Examples include the National Youth Service (Zimbabwe) and the National Youth Service (Gambia) as well as Canada's Katimavik, New Zealand's Conservation Corps, the United Kingdom's Community Service Volunteers, the United States' Conservation Corps, and others (Balogun, 2018).

When discussing the efficiency of the NYSC program in Nigeria, Udele (2012) said that the programme has scarcely made a substantial contribution to any element of the country's economic, social, or cultural life. He specifically stated that many graduates might enter the labor market via the national youth service. Many devoted corps members have received job offers in the locations of their major assignments. These grads would typically be jobless and unaware of the chances available in other regions of the nation as they wandered the streets. Communities have also benefitted from the program via the services offered by corps members, some of which would not have been available through public or private assistance.

The same is true in metropolitan areas where financial institutions, businesses, and the oil industry all benefit from their knowledge. In recent years, many corp members have been sent to other businesses, utilized in elections, and even placed as ad hoc instructors in schools (Agbaji, 2022). As a result, many of them seem to be exposed to actual teaching challenges. Unwillingness of principals and even supervisors to work with trainee teachers, inability to adhere to school rules and regulations, poor classroom adaptation, and a lack of encouragement from school teachers to collaborate with students are just a few of the difficulties student teachers face during their practicum. These issues were divided by Okonkwo and Chikwelu (2013) into three main categories: classroom management, school adaptability, and instructional-based issues.

It is possible that issues with classroom management will make it more difficult for aspiring teachers to make the best use of the time, materials, students, and physical space available in the classroom for the accomplishment of predetermined instructional goals. These difficulties vary from managing students' inadequate seating arrangements to regulating students' mobility into and out of the classroom, managing noise levels, and preventing disruptive behavior among students in a classroom setting, among others.

Another set of difficulties trainee teachers face during the required teaching practice exercise is those related to school adaptation. In order to successfully accomplish their planned purpose of acquiring the skills, information, and experience required to become an effective teacher, trainee teachers face problems that border on their incapacity to interact to people in the school environment and adapt to reality. Some environmental challenges include student teachers' inability to master the subject matter, their inability to properly use instructional materials, their inability to apply appropriate teaching techniques, the absence of pertinent textbooks and curriculum guidelines, the need to mark student exercises, their inability to improvise instructional material, and their nervousness during the delivery of lessons.

The last - instructional-based difficulties touch on elements that would make it difficult for an ad hoc instructor to successfully organize a lesson, deliver it, and assess how well it was received by the class. Ad-hoc teachers who are unable to understand the subject matter, effectively use the instructional resources, and use suitable teaching techniques are faced with instructional-based obstacles. It also addresses issues like the lack of relevant textbooks, the lack of curriculum

guidelines, marking student assignments, the difficulty of student instructors to improvise lesson plans, and anxiety during lesson presentations in the classroom, among other things. It is important to identify the practical teaching challenges faced by National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members working as ad hoc teachers in secondary schools in Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria, in order to achieve the goals of teacher education there, which include, among other things, producing highly motivated, conscientious, and effective classroom teachers for all levels of the educational system.

Recent research has been done in a variety of fields on the difficulties in educating students about teaching practice. Mapinda and Honori (2022) learned about the challenges that student teachers face when practicing their teaching in the field. Through the use of questionnaires, information was gathered from student instructors at the Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania. Findings suggest that inadequate accommodations, a lack of instructional resources, and transportation issues are the main challenges faced by student instructors during field teaching practice. Omodan (2022) looked at the difficulties South African pre-service teachers had when working in rural areas. According to the report, there are a dearth of basic facilities, physical resources, and instructional aids in rural schools. The survey also found that pupils in rural areas had difficulty learning the language of instruction, and another conclusion indicated that truancy and absenteeism are the two worst problems in rural schools. According to the report, there are significant issues related to insufficient resources, the teaching language, absenteeism, and truancy.

The Niger Delta University Experience was used by Priye (2017) to assess the effects of instructional-based difficulties on teaching practice on trainee instructors in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The findings indicated that the absence of relevant materials, such as textbooks and curriculum guidelines, had little impact on the teaching practices of trainee instructors in Nigeria's postsecondary institutions. The factors influencing trainee teachers' engagement with teaching/non-teaching staff in Nigeria were explored by Akpan, Ntukidem, Ekpiken, and Etor (2017). The study's findings showed that neither trainee teacher supported teaching or not teaching at the institution in Cross River States.

Bichi and Musa (2017) assessed the environmental issues Northwest University, Kano's teaching staff faced. According to the findings, trainee instructors at Northwest University in Kano face environmental issues such as inadequate accommodations for student teachers and a lack of resources for them, such as tables and chairs. Okobia, Ogumogu, and Osagie (2017) looked at the difficulties new instructors had when putting their lessons into reality. The findings indicate that trainee instructors' biggest class management issues are inadequate seating arrangements and managing pupils' entry and exit from the classroom.

Wanekezi, Okoli, and Mezieobi (2017) identified the environmental difficulties aspiring teachers face while practicing their craft. The results showed that trainee teachers faced a number of environmental challenges related to their practice as teachers, including the regular school teachers' lack of cooperation with student teachers and the student teachers' lack of participation in extracurricular activities. During the 2002–2003 teaching practice exercise, Ogonor and Badmus (2016) investigated the instruction-based difficulties faced by students in the Faculty of Education among the student teachers at a Nigerian university. The results of this study showed that one of the difficulties that trainee teachers in Nigeria face is their inability to use the proper teaching techniques. In a Nigerian university during the teaching practice exercise in 2002–2003, the faculty of education introduced reflective teaching to the student teachers. Ogonor and Badmus (2016)

investigated the reform outcomes of this reflective teaching. The results of this research showed that student instructors who practiced reflective teaching were happy and had a chance to advance their careers.

Koross (2016) looked at the difficulties that new teachers have when practicing their craft at the schools to which they are assigned. The results of this study show that trainee instructors' experiences affected how they thought about the teaching profession and that they encountered difficulties when actually practicing their craft. Abongdia, Adu, and Foncha (2015) looked at difficulties pre-service teachers ran into while in the classroom. The findings demonstrated that student trainee instructors were able to recognize the majority of these difficulties, which the researchers believe is a good place to start when looking for answers. In their study of numerous issues trainee instructors encounter during the teaching practice exercise, Ekundayo, Alonge, Kolawole, and Ekundayo (2014) offered potential remedies. The outcome further demonstrated that trainee instructors' perceptions of the issue they are experiencing are uniform.

For instance, Okonkwo and Chikwelu (2013) looked at the difficulties teaching practicum students at Federal College of Education (Technical) Umuze faced. According to the study's data analysis, trainee teachers at the Federal College of Education face a number of difficulties during their teaching practice exercises, including those related to classroom management, environmental issues, curriculum development and instruction, and supervision. In Anambra State, Uzoechina (2015) looked at lecturers' perceptions of the effects of teaching practice exercises on student teachers' professional development and discovered that these exercises helped student teachers get ready for the classroom and adapt their pedagogy. Despite the fact that this study added to our knowledge, the author did not look into potential obstacles that might be impeding student teachers' professional development during their teaching practice exercise. There is a knowledge gap as a result.

In a subsequent study, Ekundayo et al. (2014) used faculty of education students from three universities—Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti; Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko; and University of Benin, Benin City—to examine the challenges student-teachers encounter during practical teaching exercises in Nigeria. The research primarily focused on environmental-related obstacles and did not try to evaluate the perceived possibilities of teaching practice among students from varied domains such as classroom management, environmental, and instruction, despite the fact that many student instructors experience challenges such as social adjustment with school employees and accommodation concerns during their practical teaching, particularly when they are posted outside the university town.

From the aforementioned, research has been done on the difficulties of instructing students during practical teaching at different Nigerian institutions (including University of Benin, Edo State). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, however, none of the studies have addressed the apparent information gap about the actual teaching challenges faced by National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members working as ad hoc instructors in secondary schools in Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria. Consequently, our research aimed to close this knowledge gap.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in this investigation:

- a) What are the classroom management difficulties facing National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members serving as ad-hoc teachers in secondary schools in Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria?
- b) What are the school adaptation difficulties facing National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members serving as ad-hoc teachers in secondary schools in Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria?
- c) What are the instructional-based difficulties facing National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members serving as ad-hoc teachers in secondary schools in Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria?

2. METHODS

In this study, a survey-based descriptive research design was used. The population included all 86 Batch B (Stream 1 and Stream 2) corps members assigned to Ekpoma, Edo State's public secondary schools in 2022. The complete research sample was drawn since it is a narrow and relatively small population. The researcher created a questionnaire as the tool. Teaching Practice Difficulties Survey Questionnaire is the name of the questionnaire that was used to gather the data (TPDSQ). Sections A and B made up the questionnaire (TPDSQ). While Section B was utilized to gather information on the perceived problems of teaching practice among corps members teaching in schools, Section A included the bio-data of instructors, such as the name of their department. The questionnaire consists of 15 questions in total, divided into 5 segments. Classroom management problems (items 1–5), environmental challenges (items 6–10), and instructional-based challenges (items 11–15) are the elements and associated items (items 11-15). The ratings for each question were as follows: Strongly Agree -4, Agree - 3, Disagree - 2, and Strongly Disagree - 1. The researcher made sure that the instruments were both face and content legitimate. The Split-half reliability approach was used to assess the instruments' dependability. The National Youth Service Secretariat was visited on a Thursday, which is the day of the week when their Community Development Service (CDS) program is scheduled to take place. It was requested that the corps members who had secondary schools as their principal placement of assignment (PPA) provide their assistance. As the instrument information was supplied in the letter to respondents connected to each questionnaire, the goal of the researcher exercise was described to them. The research questions 1, 2 and 3 were analyzed using percentage (%), mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (S.D).

3. RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the classroom management difficulties facing National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members serving as ad-hoc teachers in secondary schools in Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Analysis on the Classroom Management Difficulties facing National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Members serving as ad-hoc teachers

s/n	Items	N = 427		
		\bar{X}	S.D	Remark
1	Managing poor arrangement of the sitting position of students	2.69*	.994	Agreed
2	Controlling student's movement in and out of the class	2.64*	.873	Agreed

3	Controlling noise making	2.41	.841	Disagreed
4	Punishing disruptive behaviour among students in a classroom	2.64*	.942	Agreed
5	Maintaining classroom conduct rules	2.81*	.880	Agreed

* Significant mean ($\bar{X} \geq 2.50$)

The results in Table 1 indicated that although students differed on item 3 with a mean score of 2.41, they agreed on items 1, 2, 4, and 5 with a mean score range of 2.64 to 2.81. Thus, the findings indicated that managing students' poor seating arrangements, managing students' movement into and out of the classroom, preventing disruptive behavior among students, and upholding classroom punctuality rules are among the classroom management challenges faced by National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members working as ad-hoc teachers in secondary schools in Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What are the school adaptation difficulties facing National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members serving as ad-hoc teachers in secondary schools in Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Analysis on the School Adaptation Challenges facing National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members serving as ad-hoc teachers

s/n	Items	N = 427		
		\bar{X}	S.D	Remark
1	Inability of serving corps members to conform to rules of the school of practice	2.77*	.969	Agreed
2	Lack of accommodation for ad-hoc corps members	2.32	.674	Disagreed
3	Lack of resources such as tables and chairs for ad-hoc corps members	2.40	.965	Disagreed
4	Non-cooperative attitude of the regular school teachers with corps members serving as ad-hoc teachers	2.52*	1.001	Agreed
5	Non-involvement of student teachers in extra – curricular activities	2.68*	1.139	Agreed

* Significant mean ($\bar{X} \geq 2.50$)

From the results in Table 2, respondents agreed on items 1, 4, and 5 with mean scores ranging from 2.52 to 2.77, but disagreed on items 2 and 3 with mean scores ranging from 2.32 to 2.40, respectively. the inability of student teachers to adhere to the rules of the school of practice, the regular school teachers' lack of cooperation with student teachers, and the student teachers' lack of participation in extracurricular activities are among the school adaptation challenges that National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members serving as ad-hoc teachers in secondary schools in Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria, face.

Research Question 3: What are the instructional-based difficulties facing National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members serving as ad-hoc teachers in secondary schools in Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria?

Table 3: Analysis on the Instructional-based challenges facing National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Members serving as ad-hoc Teachers

s/n	Items	N = 427		
		\bar{X}	S.D	Remark

1	Inability of serving ad-hoc teachers to utilize instructional materials properly	2.64*	.814	Agreed
2	Inability of the Corps (NYSC) members serving as ad-hoc teachers to apply appropriate teaching skills	2.44	.700	Disagreed
3	Non-availability of relevant resources such as textbooks and curriculum guidelines marking student exercise	2.45	.813	Disagreed
4	Inability of corps (NYSC) members serving as ad-hoc teachers to improvise instructional material	2.28	.902	Disagreed
5	Nervousness during lesson presentation in the classroom	2.65*	.806	Agreed

* *Significant mean* ($\bar{X} \geq 2.50$)

Findings as uncovered in Table 3 revealed that although students disagreed on items 2, 3, and 4—with mean scores ranging from 2.28 to 2.45, respectively—they did agree on items 1 and 5. As a result, findings revealed that the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members working as ad-hoc teachers in secondary schools in Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria, face a number of instructional-based challenges, including their inability to properly use instructional materials and their anxiety when delivering lessons in class.

4. DISCUSSION

The results indicated that managing poor student seating arrangements, restricting student movement into and out of the classroom, preventing disruptive behavior among students, and upholding punctuality rules are among the classroom management challenges faced by National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members working as ad-hoc teachers in secondary schools in Ekpoma, Edo State. The findings support those of Koross (2016), who found that trainee teachers' experiences had an effect on how they saw the teaching profession and that they encountered difficulties in their teaching practice.

The findings are consistent with those of Abongdia, Adu, and Foncha (2015) who discovered that student trainee instructors were able to recognize the majority of these difficulties, which the researchers believe is a good place to start when looking for answers. The outcome supports the findings of Okobia, Ogumogu, and Osagie (2017), who claimed that the majority of trainee teachers viewed fifteen out of the twenty-one items as important problems encountered during the teaching practice exercise. The result further demonstrates that trainee instructors have difficulties in class administration due to inadequate student seating arrangements and inability to supervise students' entry and exit from the classroom.

The findings indicated that the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members working as ad-hoc instructors at secondary schools in Ekpoma, Edo State have a number of difficulties in adapting to their new environment, including: an inability of the student teachers to follow the norms of the school of practice, a non-cooperative attitude on the part of the regular school teachers toward the student teachers, and a lack of commitment on the part of the student teachers in extracurricular activities.

The findings are consistent with those of Bichi and Musa (2017), who claimed that trainee teachers at Northwest University in Kano face environmental issues due to lack of space for student teachers and a shortage of supplies, such as tables and chairs for them. The findings corroborate those of

Wanekezi, Okoli, and Mezieobi (2017) who determined that trainee teachers face environmental challenges related to their practice as teachers, including the non-cooperative attitude of regular school teachers toward student teachers and the non-involvement of student teachers in extra-curricular activities. Results revealed that the inability of the student teachers to properly utilize instructional materials and anxiety during lesson presentations in the classroom is among the instructional-based challenges faced by National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members working as ad-hoc teachers in secondary schools in Ekpoma, Edo State. The findings indicated that the related issues of trainee teachers' relationships with the teaching/non-teaching staff of the teaching practice program are feeling uneasy getting along with current teachers of the school, finding it difficult to participate in discussions raised by other teachers of the school, feeling that teachers of the school are unapproachable, and finding it difficult to cope with the head teacher's leadership predisposition.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on research, it has been determined that the difficulties faced by members of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) who work as temporary instructors at secondary schools in Ekpoma, Edo State, are related to classroom management. These difficulties include managing students' bad seating arrangements, restricting their mobility in and out of the classroom, preventing disruptive behavior among students, and upholding the norms for timeliness in the classroom. The difficulties that trainee teachers had adapting to the school's norms included their incapacity to do so, the regular school instructors' lack of cooperation with them, and their lack of participation in extracurricular activities. Last but not least, some of the instructional-based difficulties experienced by trainee instructors at the school were student teachers' failure to appropriately use instructional resources and their anxiousness during lesson presentations in the classroom.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following recommendations are offered in light of the findings:

- 1) Careful selective postings should be considered in posting serving corps members who do not have any prior knowledge or formal training on teaching. In this regards, only corps members with formal training in education or those who have an interest or natural inclination for teaching should be posted to schools for easy adaption into the school rudiments and climate.
- 2) The during the orientation exercise of corps members in the NYSC camp, special pre-service orientation should be given to corps members; for the purpose of pre-informing corps members on the possible challenges they are likely to face at their various school of primary assignment.

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