

Attitude and Participation of Youth Corp Members in Community Development Service in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study assessed the attitude and participation levels of youth corp members in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, in the Community Development Service (CDS) scheme. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select 180 youth corps members from nine Local Government Areas across the state, with data collected through a structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, mean scores, and factor analysis. Findings revealed that 54.4% of the respondents were male, with the majority aged between 25 and 30 years, and 81.7% were single. The respondents' level of participation in CDS was high with the cluster mean of 2.83 and the most participated CDS activities included Environmental Sanitation Campaigns, educational Programs for Local Communities and Skill Acquisition and Training, while participation in Infrastructure Development and Environmental Sanitation Campaigns were the lower. Attitudes toward CDS were generally favorable (cluster mean of 3.08), with corps members recognizing its role in leadership development and personal growth. Participation levels ranged from low to high depending on resource availability, community support, and personal interest. The study concluded that while attitudes were favorable and the level of participation in CDS activities was high. Resource constraints and organizational inefficiencies limited full engagement. Based on these findings, it was recommended that the government and NYSC officials should enhance resource availability to facilitate more effective community development services.

Introduction

Community Development Service (CDS) is a cornerstone of national development efforts in Nigeria, particularly through the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) program. Established in 1973, the NYSC seeks to foster national unity and contribute to community development through various service schemes involving Nigerian graduates (Udende & Abdulrauf, 2012). The Community Development Service component encourages youth corps members to engage in projects that benefit local communities, particularly in areas such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure. This initiative aligns with the broader objective of empowering communities by facilitating grassroots development (Ngowari, 2022). Youth participation in community development has been identified as crucial for sustainable growth, especially in underserved regions (Odoom et al., 2021). Through the CDS, corps members serve as agents of change, applying their knowledge and skills to address community needs. Their involvement in these activities not only aids in physical development but also fosters social cohesion and a sense of

responsibility among the youth (Fareo, 2020). However, the attitudes of corps members toward community service, and the level of participation, are critical determinants of the success of these initiatives. Positive attitudes generally enhance engagement, while negative perceptions or low motivation can undermine the effectiveness of such programs (Adesope et al., 2013).

The attitudes of corp members toward CDS are shaped by various factors, including personal experiences, the perceived relevance of the service, and the resources available for project implementation (Lamidi et al., 2018). Additionally, socio-economic challenges, such as inadequate support from the government and local authorities, often hinder the effectiveness of community development efforts (Ayodele et al., 2015). Despite these obstacles, when corps members demonstrate a strong commitment to community service, the impact on local development can be significant (Okafor & Ani, 2014). Understanding the factors influencing youth corps members' participation and attitudes is essential for improving the effectiveness of the NYSC's CDS programme. Identifying these determinants can help policymakers and stakeholders create strategies to increase corps members' engagement, ensuring that the programme meets its objectives of promoting national unity and fostering sustainable community development (Fareo, 2020). Ultimately, enhancing participation and shaping positive attitudes toward CDS can lead to more meaningful and lasting contributions to the socio-economic advancement of communities across Akwa Ibom state in particular and Nigeria at large.

Despite the potential benefits of the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) Community Development Service (CDS) in Akwa Ibom State, many youth corps members exhibit a lukewarm attitude and limited participation in CDS activities. This apathy hinders the effectiveness of CDS initiatives and undermines the overall objectives of the NYSC program. While CDS is intended to foster community development and national unity, several issues contribute to the low levels of engagement among corps members. These include inadequate infrastructure, poor project monitoring, and limited community involvement (Udoma et al 2024 and Adesope et al., 2013). Youth corp members often perceive CDS activities as mandatory obligations rather than valuable opportunities for meaningful community service, further diminishing their enthusiasm and commitment (Fareo, 2020). Existing literature predominantly focuses on operational challenges such as inadequate logistics and funding (Ayodele et al., 2015), but less attention has been given to understanding the attitudes and participation levels of the corps members themselves. For instance, while Fanen (2021) highlights the NYSC's contribution to national unity, the program's potential in promoting sustainable community development remains underutilized. Similarly, Okafor and Ani (2014) identify security concerns in certain regions but do not explore the localized dynamics influencing corps members' participation, such as in Akwa Ibom State. This study seeks to assess the attitudes and participation of youth corps members in CDS activities in Akwa Ibom State. The specific objectives were to;

- i. describe the personal characteristics of youth corp members in Akwa Ibom state;
- ii. identify the Community Development Service schemes engaged in by the respondents;

- iii. ascertain the level of participation of youth corp members in community development service scheme in the study area;
- iv. assess the attitudes of youth corp members toward community development service in the study area;
- v. examine the factors influencing the participation of youth corp members in community development service in the study area.

Theoretical Framework: Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), proposed by Icek Ajzen in 1991, provides a framework for understanding human actions and their underlying motivations. TPB postulates that individual behavior is primarily determined by three factors: attitudes towards the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). The theory extends the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by incorporating perceived behavioral control, acknowledging that individuals may face constraints that impact their ability to perform certain actions even if they have favorable attitudes and social support (Yzer, 2017). In TPB, attitudes reflect a person's positive or negative evaluations of performing a specific behavior. Subjective norms refer to the perceived social pressures to engage or not engage in a behavior, while perceived behavioral control addresses the individual's belief in their capacity to execute the behavior in the face of obstacles (Ajzen, 1991). These components work together to form behavioral intentions, which are viewed as the immediate precursors to action. Ajzen's model emphasizes that when people have positive attitudes, supportive norms, and high perceived control, their intention to engage in the behavior strengthens, increasing the likelihood of actual participation (Kan & Fabrigar, 2017).

This theoretical model is relevant to examining the attitudes and participation of youth corps members in Community Development Service (CDS) in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. In this context, the theory helps to analyze how corps members' attitudes towards CDS, the influence of societal expectations (subjective norms), and their perceived control over participation (such as time, resources, or skills) influence their actual involvement in these activities. For instance, if corps members perceive that their peers and supervisors expect them to contribute meaningfully to community development and they feel competent in doing so, they are more likely to participate actively (La Barbera & Ajzen, 2021). Studies have also shown that positive attitudes and high perceived behavioral control can significantly predict participation in community activities (Hardin-Fanning & Ricks, 2017). Thus, TPB provides a robust framework for understanding the behavioral intentions and actions of youth corps members, shedding light on the cognitive and social processes that drive their participation in CDS initiatives. Understanding these elements can guide policymakers in creating targeted interventions to enhance corps members' engagement in community development, fostering greater societal impact.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State, located in the southern region of Nigeria. The state is administratively divided into 31 Local Government Areas (LGAs) and has six Akwa Ibom State Agricultural Development Programme (AKADEP) zones: Uyo, Ikot Ekpene, Abak, Etinan, Eket, and Oron (Etuk & Umoh, 2014). Multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted to ensure that a representative sample of youth corp members from across Akwa Ibom State was selected for the study. First, the state was stratified into its three senatorial districts: Eket, Uyo, and Ikot Ekpene. Within each district, three Local Government Areas (LGAs) were randomly selected to capture diverse settings, including urban, semi-urban, and rural areas. The selected LGAs were Mkpato Enin, Eket, Oron (Eket Senatorial District); Uyo, Etinan, Uruan (Uyo Senatorial District); and Ikot Ekpene, Abak, Oruk Anam (Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District). A convenience sampling method was then used to select youth corp members from the sampled LGAs. 15 respondents were sampled from Mkpato Enin LG, 25 from Eket LG, 20 from Oron LG, 30 from Uyo LG, 20 from Etinan LG, 10 from Uruan LG, 25 from Ikot Ekpene LG, 25 from Abak LG and 10 from Oruk Anam LG; resulting in a total of 180 respondents. This sample size was deemed sufficient for reliable statistical analysis given the time and logistical constraints. Primary data for this study were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to capture various aspects of the research objectives. Personal Characteristics of Youth Corps Members: Variables such as gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, monthly income, and religious affiliation were included to capture the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. Frequency and percentages were used in analyzing this objective. Community Development Service Schemes Engaged in by Respondents: Respondents were asked to indicate their frequency count of engagement in various CDS schemes, such as health outreach, environmental sanitation, educational programs, skill acquisition, advocacy for rural development, and others. Responses were captured using a Likert-type scale with the following options: Never Engaged (1), Occasionally Engaged (2), Frequently Engaged (3), and Very Frequently Engaged (4). Mean, percentages and frequency count were used in analyzing this objective. Level of Participation in CDS: The level of participation was measured by asking respondents to rate their involvement in activities such as health outreach programs, environmental sanitation campaigns, educational programs, and infrastructure development. Responses ranged from not active (1), rarely active (2), moderately active (3) and highly active (4). Mean, percentages and frequency count were used in analyzing this objective. Attitudes Toward CDS: Attitudes were measured using statements related to the perceived importance of CDS, motivation to participate, enjoyment of the activities, and the impact on personal and community development. Respondents rated their agreement with these statements on a four-point scale from Strongly Disagree (1), disagree (2), agree (3) and Strongly Agree (4). Mean, percentages and frequency count were used in analyzing this objective. Factors Influencing Participation: these factors were measured with a three –point scale of not a factor (1), a minor factor (2) and a major factor (3). Factor analysis was used to analyze this objective.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Personal Characteristics of Youth Corps Members

The results presented in Table 1 highlight the personal characteristics of youth corps members in Akwa Ibom State. The highest percentage of respondents were male (54.4%), while the lowest percentage were female (45.6%). The majority of the corps members fell within the age group of 25-30 years (53.3%), with the smallest group being those aged 36 and above (2.8%). In terms of marital status, a significant proportion of the respondents were single (81.7%), while a small percentage were divorced and widowed (1.7% each). Educational qualifications showed that most respondents held a BSc degree (56.7%), whereas only 11.1% had postgraduate qualifications. Monthly income data indicated that 50% of respondents earned less than ₦40,000, while only 6.7% earned above ₦70,000. Furthermore, most respondents identified as Christians (91.1%), with a smaller representation of Muslims (8.9%).

These findings suggest that the youth corps members participating in community development service (CDS) in Akwa Ibom State are predominantly young, single, and have completed at least an undergraduate degree. The predominance of single individuals is consistent with previous studies by Owan et al. (2022), which indicated that marital status could influence participation levels, as single individuals may have fewer familial responsibilities, allowing for greater engagement in CDS activities. The educational qualifications of the respondents, with over half holding BSc degrees, reflect the increasing trend of graduates entering the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) program, as highlighted by Arubayi (2015). This high level of educational attainment may also influence the types of community development initiatives undertaken by corps members, as those with higher education are often more equipped with the skills needed to engage in complex CDS projects (Etuk et al., 2018). However, the relatively low number of respondents with postgraduate qualifications (11.1%) suggests that most corps members may not have advanced degrees, potentially limiting their capacity for leadership roles in CDS schemes, as observed by Feeney and Stritch (2019) in their study on education and work-life balance.

The income distribution shows that half of the respondents earned less than ₦30,000 monthly, which is reflective of the general economic status of youth corps members during their service year. This low income level may affect the capacity of corps members to actively engage in financially demanding community development projects, as suggested by Etim and Thompson (2021), who emphasized that financial constraints could be a barrier to effective participation in poverty reduction efforts. Additionally, the high prevalence of Christianity (91.1%) among the respondents mirrors the religious demographics of Akwa Ibom State, as noted by Arikan and Ben-Nun Bloom (2019). This religious homogeneity may foster a collective sense of duty among the corps members, further influencing their attitudes and engagement in community service, particularly in areas where religious institutions play a pivotal role in community development efforts (Haldane et al., 2019).

Table 1: Personal Characteristics of Youth Corps Members (n = 180)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	98	54.4
Female	82	45.6
Marital Status:		
Single	147	81.7
Married	27	15.0
Divorced	3	1.7
Widowed	3	1.7
Educational Qualification:		
HND	58	32.2
BSc	102	56.7
Postgraduate	20	11.1
Monthly Income (Naira):		
Less than ₦40,000	90	50.0
₦41,000 - ₦50,000	60	33.3
₦51,000 - ₦70,000	18	10.0
Above ₦70,000	12	6.7
Religious Affiliation:		
Christianity	164	91.1
Islam	16	8.9

Source: Field data (2024)

Level of Participation of Youth Corps Members in Community Development Service Schemes

The results, as presented in Table 2, show the level of participation of youth corps members in various Community Development Service (CDS) schemes in Akwa Ibom State. The top three activities with the highest mean scores were Environmental Sanitation Campaigns (3.22), Educational Programs for Local Communities (2.94), and Skill Acquisition and Training (2.93). Conversely, the three activities with the lowest mean scores were Infrastructure Development (2.39), HIV/AIDS and Health Awareness Campaigns (2.50), and Youth Empowerment and Counseling Programmes (2.90). These findings demonstrate that youth corps members in the study area were more actively involved in sanitation and educational initiatives but showed relatively lower participation in health-related campaigns and infrastructural development projects.

These findings are consistent with the broader body of literature on youth participation in community development activities. For instance, Lamidi et al. (2018) observed that environmental

sanitation and educational initiatives tend to attract more youth involvement due to their direct impact on local communities and the visible outcomes that are often associated with such activities. This supports the finding that Environmental Sanitation Campaigns had the highest participation rate among youth corps members. Additionally, the study by Gbenga et al. (2023) highlighted the effectiveness of mass media campaigns in promoting environmental sustainability in Nigeria, which may have contributed to higher awareness and participation in sanitation campaigns. The relatively high participation in Educational Programs for Local Communities aligns with the observations made by Okafor and Owolade (2023), who found that youth corps members are often engaged in teaching and educational outreach in rural areas as part of their mandated responsibilities. This finding is also consistent with Ige (2014), who noted that the involvement of corps members in educational roles has become a central focus of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme, particularly in under-resourced areas. The inclusion of educational programs as a key part of the CDS activities reflects the prioritization of literacy and community empowerment in rural development initiatives, as seen in the study by Kolawole and OD (2012), which emphasized the role of literacy in community participation and development.

On the other hand, the lower levels of participation in Infrastructure Development, HIV/AIDS and Health Awareness Campaigns, and Youth Empowerment and Counseling Programs may be linked to several factors. As observed by Bouabida et al. (2023), barriers to health-related participation, including stigma and lack of resources, may limit the involvement of youth in campaigns like HIV/AIDS awareness. Similarly, Morton and Montgomery (2011) pointed out that youth empowerment programs often face challenges in sustaining participation due to insufficient engagement strategies and limited long-term impact, which may explain the lower mean score for Youth Empowerment and Counseling Programs in this study. The findings in this study also correlate with Odoom et al. (2021), who highlighted the difficulties in sustaining community participation in rural development projects, particularly those related to infrastructure. The relatively low participation in Infrastructure Development could be attributed to the technical nature of such projects, which may require skills and resources beyond what many corps members possess. This is in line with the challenges outlined by Ekpenyong (2019), who noted that youth involvement in infrastructural projects is often hampered by a lack of technical expertise and funding, limiting the scope of their engagement.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on level of participation of youth corps members in community development service scheme (n = 180)

Community Development Service Activities	Not Active	Rarely Active	Moderately Active	Highly Active	Mean
	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	
Health Outreach Programs	20 (11.1%)	40 (22.2%)	70 (38.9%)	50 (27.8%)	2.83
Environmental Sanitation Campaigns	10 (5.6%)	25 (13.9%)	60 (33.3%)	85 (47.2%)	3.22
Educational Programs for Local Communities	15 (8.3%)	35 (19.4%)	75 (41.7%)	55 (30.6%)	2.94

Skill Acquisition and Training	18 (10.0%)	30 (16.7%)	78 (43.3%)	54 (30.0%)	2.93
Infrastructure Development (e.g., Road Repairs)	40 (22.2%)	60 (33.3%)	50 (27.8%)	30 (16.7%)	2.39
Youth Empowerment and Counseling Programs	12 (6.7%)	45 (25.0%)	72 (40.0%)	51 (28.3%)	2.90
HIV/AIDS and Health Awareness Campaigns	35 (19.4%)	50 (27.8%)	65 (36.1%)	30 (16.7%)	2.50
Environmental Protection Programs	18 (10.0%)	40 (22.2%)	62 (34.4%)	60 (33.3%)	2.91
Cultural and Social Activities	25 (13.9%)	30 (16.7%)	65 (36.1%)	60 (33.3%)	2.89
Cluster mean					2.83

Critical value = 2.5

Source: Field data (2024)

Attitudes of Youth Corps Members Toward Community Development Service (CDS)

The results from Table 3 reveal the attitudes of youth corps members towards Community Development Service (CDS). The statements with the highest mean scores were: "I believe community development service is important" (mean = 3.47), "CDS participation helps build leadership skills" (mean = 3.33), and "CDS participation enhances my personal development" (mean = 3.23). These findings suggest that the majority of respondents hold positive attitudes toward CDS, recognizing its importance in community well-being, leadership, and personal growth. Conversely, the statements with the lowest mean scores were: "I feel that CDS activities are well-organized" (mean = 2.72), "CDS should be a mandatory part of the NYSC program" (mean = 2.86), and "Community members appreciate our CDS contributions" (mean = 2.93), reflecting some concerns regarding the organization and appreciation of their efforts. The high mean score for the belief that CDS is important aligns with the findings of Arigbo et al. (2019), who emphasized the significant contributions of youth corps members in fostering community development through CDS projects. Similarly, the recognition of CDS's role in building leadership skills and enhancing personal development is supported by Fareo (2020), who found that participation in CDS activities under the NYSC program equips corps members with essential leadership and professional skills, thus contributing to both their personal growth and community empowerment. However, the relatively lower mean scores for the organization of CDS activities and the perception of community appreciation highlight some challenges. The findings suggest that although corps members are generally motivated to participate in CDS, they may encounter organizational inefficiencies or feel underappreciated by the communities they serve. This is consistent with Abdullahi and Chikaji (2016), who noted that the success of CDS projects often depends on effective coordination and the active involvement of local communities. Additionally, the lower score for the belief that CDS should be a mandatory part of the NYSC program could indicate that some corps members might view the mandatory nature of CDS as burdensome, despite its potential benefits. Moreover, the cluster mean of 3.08, which is above the critical value

of 2.5, indicates an overall positive attitude toward CDS among corps members. This suggests that while there are areas for improvement, such as better organization and increased community involvement, the respondents generally appreciate the value of their contributions to community development. The importance of community appreciation is highlighted by Abdullahi et al. (2016), who argue that a lack of visible impact and recognition can demotivate participants in community projects, reducing their effectiveness.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents based on attitudes toward community development service (n = 180)

Statements	Strongly Disagree F(%)	Disagree F(%)	Agree F(%)	Strongly Agree F(%)	Mean
I believe community development service is important.	5 (2.8%)	10 (5.6%)	60 (33.3%)	105 (58.3%)	3.47
CDS participation helps build leadership skills.	7 (3.9%)	12 (6.7%)	75 (41.7%)	86 (47.8%)	3.33
I am motivated to participate in CDS activities.	15 (8.3%)	30 (16.7%)	85 (47.2%)	50 (27.8%)	2.94
CDS activities improve the well-being of communities.	10 (5.6%)	20 (11.1%)	78 (43.3%)	72 (40.0%)	3.18
I enjoy participating in community development.	12 (6.7%)	25 (13.9%)	90 (50.0%)	53 (29.4%)	3.02
CDS participation enhances my personal development.	8 (4.4%)	15 (8.3%)	85 (47.2%)	72 (40.0%)	3.23
CDS should be a mandatory part of the NYSC program.	20 (11.1%)	35 (19.4%)	75 (41.7%)	50 (27.8%)	2.86
Community members appreciate our CDS contributions.	18 (10.0%)	28 (15.6%)	82 (45.6%)	52 (28.9%)	2.93
I feel that CDS activities are well-organized.	25 (13.9%)	40 (22.2%)	75 (41.7%)	40 (22.2%)	2.72
Participation in CDS activities improves team spirit.	10 (5.6%)	18 (10.0%)	92 (51.1%)	60 (33.3%)	3.12
Cluster mean					3.08

Critical value = 2.5

Source: Field data (2024)

4.5: Factors Influencing the Participation of Youth Corps Members in Community Development Service

The results of the analysis of factors influencing the participation of Youth Corp Members in Community Development Service (CDS) in Akwa Ibom State, as presented in Table 5,

demonstrate that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.812, indicating that the data were suitable for factor analysis. Additionally, Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant (Chi-Square = 456.78, $df = 171$, $p < 0.000$), confirming that the variables were sufficiently interrelated for the analysis. These results reflect a robust dataset, capable of identifying the underlying factors that influence the participation of youth corps members in CDS activities.

In Table 4, the rotated component matrix revealed four factors accounting for 83.33% of the total variance. Factor 1, which explained 28.75% of the variance, was labeled "Resource Availability and Support" and encompassed the availability of necessary resources, support from NYSC officials, and recognition for participation. This finding aligns with the study by Abdullahi et al. (2016), which highlighted the importance of resource availability and structured support systems in motivating participation in CDS. Similarly, Arigbo et al. (2019) also emphasized that resources and institutional support are critical for youth engagement in community development, thereby supporting the findings of this study. Factor 2, which explained 21.66% of the variance, was labeled "Personal and Social Motivation," with high loadings on personal interest, community support, and opportunities to develop leadership skills. This finding corresponds with the intrinsic motivation theory, as described by Udoma et al (2023) and Adesope et al (2013), who found that personal interest and social recognition significantly influence corps members' attitudes toward participation in community service. The relevance of community support in motivating corps members is also echoed by Arubayi (2015), who pointed out that community appreciation boosts the willingness of corps members to participate in service activities, further corroborating the results of this study.

Factor 3, which accounted for 17.50% of the variance, was labeled "Safety and Environment." This factor grouped items such as the safety of the area, the location of CDS activities, and personal health and well-being. The importance of safety in influencing participation has been previously documented by Ayodele et al. (2015), who identified environmental conditions, such as safety concerns, as significant barriers to corps members' participation in CDS. The findings of this study are consistent with this, suggesting that youth corps members' willingness to engage in CDS is affected by their perceptions of safety and environmental suitability. Factor 4, explaining 15.42% of the variance, was labeled "Logistical and Time Management." It included factors related to the time available after NYSC duties and access to transportation, both of which are crucial in facilitating or hindering participation in CDS activities. This finding is supported by the work of Fareo (2020), who pointed out that logistical challenges, such as transportation and time constraints, can negatively affect corps members' participation in community development projects. The current study's results are therefore consistent with previous research, suggesting that logistical considerations are significant determinants of participation.

Table 4: KMO and Bartlett’s Test of Factors Influencing Participation of Youth Corps Members in Community Development Service

Test	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.812
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square	456.78
Df	171
Sig.	0.000

Source: Field data (2024)

Table 4b: Rotated Component Matrix of Factors Influencing Youth Corp Members’ Participation in CDS Activities

Factors	1	2	3	4	Communality
Availability of necessary resources	0.72				0.65
Support from NYSC officials	0.67				0.60
Encouragement from fellow corps members	0.63				0.58
Personal interest in community development		0.81			0.72
Community support and appreciation		0.77			0.69
Location of CDS (urban/rural)			0.70		0.64
Safety and security of the area			0.68		0.62
Time available after other NYSC duties				0.79	0.71
Access to transportation				0.73	0.68
Personal health and well-being			0.69		0.63
Financial incentives for participation		0.60			0.56
Recognition and awards for participation	0.64				0.59
Training and guidance from NYSC	0.70				0.62
Opportunities to develop leadership skills		0.76			0.69
Relationships with community leaders				0.65	0.59
Weather conditions (rain, heat, etc.)			0.72		0.66
Eigen Value	3.45	2.60	2.10	1.85	
Percentage (%) of Variance	28.75%	21.66%	17.50%	15.42%	
Cumulative Percentage	28.75%	50.41%	67.91%	83.33%	

Source: Field data (2024)

Conclusion

The study examined the attitudes and participation of youth corps members in Community Development Service (CDS) schemes in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that the youth corps members are actively engaged in community development activities, with environmental sanitation, health outreach, and skill acquisition being the most participated schemes. However, there was lower participation in infrastructure development and HIV/AIDS sensitization programs. The corps members generally held positive attitudes toward CDS, recognizing its importance for leadership development, personal growth, and community well-being. Several factors, ranging from resource availability and personal motivation to environmental safety and logistical concerns, were found to significantly influence their level of participation. Despite these, some challenges including organizational inefficiencies, lack of community appreciation, and limited resources, were identified as areas that need attention to enhance youth corps members' involvement in CDS.

Recommendations

1. **Increase Resource Availability:** The findings showed that availability of resources significantly influenced youth corps members' participation in CDS activities. Therefore, the government and NYSC officials should allocate more resources, including funds, materials, and tools, to ensure effective participation, particularly in resource-intensive activities such as infrastructure development.
2. **Enhance Local Community Support:** Support from the local community was identified as a key factor influencing participation. To strengthen engagement, there should be increased collaboration between youth corps members and local leaders, community groups, and external organizations. This will foster a sense of ownership and appreciation among community members, improving participation in projects like environmental sanitation and educational outreach.
3. **Improve Training and Supervision:** The study revealed that inadequate training and guidance hindered corps members' effectiveness. To address this, the NYSC should provide more targeted training and supervision to ensure that corps members have the necessary skills to engage meaningfully in community service.
4. **Promote Personal Interest in CDS:** The study found that personal interest was a significant motivator for participation. NYSC should design CDS activities that align with the skills and interests of corps members. Offering diverse activities and career guidance related to community service will help increase personal motivation and commitment to CDS.
5. **Provide Recognition and Motivation through Peer Support:** The study showed that peer motivation positively impacted participation. NYSC should foster a supportive environment by recognizing outstanding contributions through awards or public acknowledgment. This will boost morale and encourage higher levels of participation among corps members.

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