



IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS ACQUISITION ON SELF-RELIANCE AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT OF YOUTH CORP MEMBERS THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING AND EMPLOYMENT FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition program has enhanced the competency and capacity of targeted participants and has helped to be self-reliant and self-employable. Nigerian's Higher Educational Institutional (HEIs) are mandated to offer Entrepreneurship Development Courses (EED). This is complimented with three weeks Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development at the Orientation Camp during National Youth Service Corps service years. Expectedly, these Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition is being used to solve the problem of poverty, unemployment and economic retardation. These are reasons why this study focus at the impact the programme had on Self-Reliance and Self-Employment of Youth Corps Members through programme for Sustainable Development in Oyo State of Nigeria. One hundred (100) Youth Corp Members were sampled from each of the 33 Local Government Areas of the study totaling 3,300 as sample size. The Google form questionnaire were used as main instrument for the collection of data. The arithmetic mean was used to interpret and analyses data from the two research questions that were raised while ANOVA were used to test the two null hypothesis that was used for construction at 0.05 level of significance. The results shown that there is significant positive relationship between enterprenurial skills acquisition and self-reliance and self-employment through capacity building employment generated. Conclusively, this paper highlighted the meaning, reflection and importance of the capacity building and training of Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition on Self-Reliance and Self-Employment, and stated the obvious challenges. According to this study, Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition will benefit all stakeholders such as youth corp members, Local, State and Federal Governments, and interested groups if it is strengthened.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial, Employability, Skills, Sustainability, Youth

Introduction

Entrepreneurship Skills Development is an aspect of education and training with the sole aim of developing the competency and capacity of students and trainees on skills, ideas, and managerial abilities necessary for personal and business development (Nwokolo, 1997). This is why the government of the day is redirecting its education and training policies toward the Technical and Vocational Education and Training that focus on Entrepreneurship Skills Development. Incidentally and by policy, the Federal Republic of Nigeria anchored on the fact that Entrepreneurship skills education and training is a programme of human capital resources development. Hence, its relevance is enhanced in the

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National Policy of Education (2004) which emphasizes shared responsibility for the common good of self and society through competencies and capacities necessary for self-reliance. As submitted by Anho, J. E (2022) that Entrepreneurship training and education is aimed at making men and women who can be self-reliant self-sufficient, and are also able to provide jobs for others. Moreover, this can lead to economic readjustment and redistribution of wealth and related social status. By explanation, entrepreneurship training specifically emphasizes the learning of routine and programme behaviors that can be applied to risk and risk perception, vision reception, interpretation and follow up the determination to succeed. Contemporary education is a progressive technique and tools enlightenment, empowerment and sustainable development the human race. A well-planned, articulated and strategic platform on education, like entrepreneurial skills acquisition, education and training as we have it presently across the country, comes with the expectation of generating improved positive impacts on learning and development in our higher educational institutions. This helps to facilitate the outcomes that are desirable to both trainers and learners. Certainly, this will ensure that the trainees are economically self-reliant, enhanced productivity and assured poverty alleviation. Owojori et al (2024) posited that the Nigerian economy has gone through distress and failure to address the economy's structural weaknesses, particularly to diversify the economy, lessen reliance on oil exports and other imports, and to build effective productive agricultural-based industry is the underlying cause of the nation's unemployment and economic underdevelopment. However, refocusing on entrepreneurial skills acquisition would provide the opportunity for individual self-reliance and self-employability that would reduce unemployment and the so-called economic distress in the nation. It will also avert the consequences of youth restiveness and crime. The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD (2018) positioned that to have functional education that includes skills acquisition and entrepreneurship development, all stakeholders in the education and economic management must be involved. There is no gainsaying that higher educational institutions graduates are mostly not self-reliant, unemployable and not really contributing to the attainment of sustainable development goals of the nation. This is largely traced to a lack of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development. Notably, Agusioba (1997) claimed that effective skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development is indispensable for empowering graduates that are self-reliant and self-employable to generate dynamic economic for the nation. Exclusively, if these trends continue, we only not only produce higher educational institutions' that will not only be employable but also employers of labour. Therefore, one of the challenges facing higher educational institutions' graduates today is the production of graduates of an internationally acceptable standard with requisite knowledge and skills in and out of professionally centered jobs, as well as in vocational and technical education and training. Thus, entrepreneurship skills acquisition can be made to solve problems of unemployment, underdevelopment and sustainable development. Thus, this research focuses at the impact of entrepreneurial skill acquisition on self-reliance and self-employment of youth corps members for sustainable development in Oyo State of Nigeria, so as to offer reasonable and necessary recommendations.



Aims and Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

- i. Assess the impact of Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition on Self-Reliance and Self-Employment of Youth Corp members for Sustainable Development;
- ii. Investigate the influence of Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition on the Self-Reliance of Youth Corp members;
- iii. Ascertain the influence of Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition on the Self-Employment of Youth Corp members; and
- iv. Examine the extent to which Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition affects the Self-Reliance and Self-Employment of Youth Corp members for Sustainability.

Hypothesis

H1: There is no significant difference Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Self-Reliance and Self-Employment of Youth Corps-members through Capacity Building and Employment for Sustainable Development in Oyo State, Nigeria.

H0: There is significant difference Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Self-Reliance and Self-Employment of Youth Corps-members through Capacity Building and Employment for Sustainable Development in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Concept of Entrepreneurial Skills Development

The population of unemployed youth in Nigeria is said to be decreasing and now 4.1% (Nigeria Bureau Statistic (NBS), 2023). Worrysome is that nearly half is presumed to be graduates with qualifications across disciplines and educated at various universities and polytechnics in the country. According to the report, Nigeria's political transition periods are usually marked by a change of government and a revival of economic activity, which is why growth is expected to remain at a relatively slow pace of 3% in 2023 as stipulated by (KPMG Nigeria Limited, 2023). Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) become 2.51% in real terms in Q2 which is lower than 3.54% that was gotten in Q2 of year 2022 (Business Day, 2023) as enumerated by the data. To address the issue, the Federal Ministry of Youth and Social Development of the National Government of Nigeria's National Youth Service Corps program's Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) program became essential. In an effort to revive the nation following the Nigerian Civil War, the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) program was established. According to decree No. 24 of May 22, 1973, the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) was established with the intention of properly encouraging and developing common ties among Nigerian youths and promoting national unity. This was prompted by the regrettable antecedents of the Civil War, which lasted from 6 July 1967 to 15 January 1970 in the nation's history (Federal Ministry of Education, 2022). This made the National Youth Service Corps program's Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) program necessary. Owojori et al (2024) submitted that there is no point in

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disputing that the youth of any nation are its future and further posited that this was done in an effort to provide them with the right direction and guidance in light of the nation's needs. No wonder, a directorate within the program supports the Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) Department, headed by a director. This directorate is composed of two units: the Entrepreneurship and Empowerment Division and the Skills Acquisition Division. Thousands of young graduates are sensitized and mobilized for skill acquisition each year by the directorate, which also facilitates the training and mentoring of hundreds of young graduates in entrepreneurship development and skill acquisition for self-reliance each year. Encourage public-private partnerships to help young Nigerians become more self-reliant and entrepreneurial; Encourage the recording and dissemination of Nigerian youth empowerment best practices; Encourage evidence-based lobbying for policies that will empower Nigeria's youth; raising awareness and encouraging corps members to sign up for the program that develops their skills and entrepreneurship; creating a standardized curriculum for the skill-acquisition activity that takes place in camp; State-level organizations that offer mentoring and training in particular skill sets are identified; participation of the corps members in different organizations aimed at fostering entrepreneurship and skill development; continuous oversight and monitoring of corps trainees; along will make it easier to access the available funding opportunities. Better still, Owojori et al (2024) agreed that according to the most recent count, all Nigerian higher education institutions have the necessary infrastructure and other elements. Although, entrepreneurship is not the same as technical and vocational training, they are nonetheless closely associated. They may be used interchangeably for this reason. By offering courses that are aligned with curricula, entrepreneurship education has risen dramatically in the majority of industrialized nations. According to Tiough et al. (2017), entrepreneurship is significant, advantageous, and highly relevant in the TVET curriculum. They recommend that TVET students be provided with sufficient funding to visit job centers and businesses to broaden their knowledge while in school, and that the government should relax tax laws to encourage people to start their own businesses. This is viewed as a positive step in the right direction and teaches young people how to be independent and self-employed. This development has guaranteed an entrepreneurial human capacity for national development in addition to addressing the issues of unemployment and underemployment. The study's specific goals are to ascertain how much the recovery and sustainability of the economy have been aided by NYSC Corp members. The entrepreneur is commonly seen as an innovator, a pioneer, and ground breaker, originator of goods or services. Shuaibu et. al (2021) went further to say that Entrepreneurship is the act of being an Entrepreneur which involves the process of generating ideas and venturing into business risk created by dynamic environment and making the best of opportunities for profit purpose. Entrepreneurship enables one to be innovative, creative and have the ability to take business risks to become successful. Entrepreneurship involves innovation; bringing something new to a market that does not exist before. Even if the market already exists, there is no guarantee that the new product will survive the introduction stage of the product life cycle, taking into consideration the teething competition. Some scholars are of the view that entrepreneurship is a service rendered by anyone who starts a new business (Ogundele et all, 2013). The role of entrepreneurship towards the economic and social

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development of a nation according to (Ogundele et al, 2013) include: identification of business opportunities; selection of opportunities; decision on form of enterprise; allocation and distribution of resources; coordination of other factors of production such as land, labour, and capital; planning and controlling organisational programmes and activities; maximization and utilisation of locally produced raw materials; risk bearing; creating of employment opportunities; marketing activities for customer satisfaction; Promote balanced regional development, reduces concentration on economic power; and innovation to meet with needs of local market. Entrepreneurship education is viewed by Shuaibu et al (2020) as an attempt to create value through recognition of business opportunities, communicative, and management skills to mobilize human, financial and material resources necessary to bring a project to function. Entrepreneurship education is seen as the process of creating something different with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychological, and social risk, and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction (Hisrich et al, 2017). Entrepreneurship Education is a learning process that prepares people to be responsible and enterprising individuals. It helps people develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to achieve the goals they set out for themselves (Ideas Group Inc., 2022).

Entrepreneurship Skills Development as a Catalyst for Self-Reliance and Self-Employment.

The need to produce graduates who will not only be self-reliant but employer of labour cannot be overemphasized. The idea of introducing Entrepreneurship Education to the educational system in Nigeria has resulted in job creation among the students after leaving school, which makes them self-reliant and employers of labour. This is due to the alarming rate of unemployment in the country, whereby a graduate that have minimum of a first degree or a second degree will be looking for job opportunities or white-collar jobs for years without being employed. As a result of this, the Federal Ministry of Education directed that entrepreneurship education be included as part of the curricula of the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education through the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) effective from 2007/2008 academic session Gabadeen and Raimi (2016). Also to achieve 21st century skills as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals which were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 in which Nigeria is one of them as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity which are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. The entire 17 Sustainable Development Goals are targeted at eradicating poverty in the land, to achieve these laudable goals, each country should give priority to Vocational/Technical Education and Training in academic curriculums as this will afford every individual to have basic skills in a trade or profession that will be a source of livelihood, thereby eradicating the poverty in the land. According to Akinyele et al (2018), Entrepreneurship Education can be used as a catalyst for employment creation, poverty eradication, national growth, and security because this has remained the major instrument for national development for many countries of the world. Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Anidiobu et al (2016) noted that Education

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remains a vital transformational tool and formidable instrument for socio-economic empowerment, wealth creation, and employment generation, poverty alleviation and value orientation, which the government has talked about for so long now. Suffice it to be mentioned that education, training and experience can increase the supply of entrepreneurs by making available more skills that are suitable for entrepreneurial endeavour.

Challenges of Entrepreneurship Skills Development

There is a dearth of teaching personnel or qualified teachers to teach Entrepreneurship Education: Some of the teachers employed to teach Entrepreneurship Education are not competent in terms of professional qualification, practical skills and knowledge of business opportunities after graduation. The teachers are expected to know the methodology, the content and the practical aspect of it.

- a) **Lack of Funds:** Enough funds are not allocated to finance Entrepreneurship Education in most of the institutions of higher learning. Funds are needed to set up an Entrepreneurship Centre, procurement of equipment and materials, organize seminars or workshops for teachers and students to acquire entrepreneurship skills as well as funds to employ qualified personnel. Also, there are no adequate funds to maintain some of the equipment used.
- b) **Inadequate Infrastructures:** Infrastructures here refer to the Buildings, workshops or classrooms used in teaching and learning Entrepreneurship Education courses. Most of the Buildings have dilapidated, most of the equipment are obsolete, there is a lack of electricity in most of the classrooms and where there are fittings, and there is no funding to power them in terms of paying Electricity Bills, Using Generators or Solar and buying fuel.
- c) **Insufficient Facilities:** In every institution, Entrepreneurship centres should have a laboratory or a specific place where the students should have access or get familiar with the equipment needed for the course as well as being able to practice or they have learnt or taught. But in most of the institution of higher learning, these facilities or laboratory does not exist, and where they have it, it is not enough to cater for the needs of the students.
- d) **Mismanagement of Resources:** Most of the funds allocated by the government to finance entrepreneurship education are being embezzled by the people in charge. Corruption is in every sector of the economy.

Research Methodology

This study used the descriptive survey method. The research employed the purposive random sampling method to select 3,300 youth corp members from all the thirty-three National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Offices all the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Oyo State in Nigeria. These youth corp members selected and sampled from each of the LGAs among the youth corp-members who were not only taught Introduction to Entrepreneurship and Practice of Entrepreneurship at their respective Higher



Educational Institutions, but also undergone Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development programme of NYSC for at least three weeks. The main instrument utilized in this study was a Google Form questionnaire titled Impact of Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition on Self-Reliance and Self-Employment of Youth Corps Members (IESASSYC-M). It was designed on a 4-Point Likert Scale Rating of High Impact-4, Moderate Impact-3, Little Impact-2, No Impact-1. The instrument was divided into three parts:-Part One on Bio-data, Part Two on the qualities and roles of an Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition on outcomes of Youth Corp-Members Employability and Part Three on Employability on Sustainable Development in Oyo State. The instrument was validated by senior colleagues who are experts in testing and measurements. Also, the draft Google form questionnaire was be given to experts at Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State and the Centre for Entrepreneurship Development-Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Oyo State. The expected corrections and suggestions were observed. In order to establish the reliability, a pre-test of 330 youth corp members was made and their mean ratings obtained with computer analysis was conducted. The Community Development Service gathering points were used as platforms for sensitization of the youth corp members on the research study and administration of the Google form questionnaire, which was sent to them through WhatsApp. The arithmetic mean was used for item interpretation, analysis and data presentation on tables. Since the items was based on 4-Points Likert Scale Ratings with an average of 2.50, in interpreting the results, High Impact and Moderate Impact was considered as impact while Little Impact and No Impact were considered as no impact. Items with mean ratings up to and above 2.50 were regarded as having impact while mean ratings below 2.50 were considered as no impact. The t-test statistic was used to test the formulated hypotheses.

Results of Findings

Testing of Hypotheses

Ho 1: There is no significant difference in Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Self-Reliance and Self-Employment of Youth Corps-members through Capacity Building and Employment for Sustainable Development in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Table 4.1: Test of Significance of the Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Self-Reliance and Self-Employment of Youth Corps-members through Capacity Building and Employment for Sustainable Development in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Figure 4.1: Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Self-Reliance and Self-Employment of Youth Corps-members through Capacity Building and Employment for Sustainable Development in Oyo State, Nigeria.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Tc</i>	<i>Tt</i>	<i>Df</i>	Decision
<i>Male</i>	1100	31.65	28.81	0.89	1.96	498	NS
<i>Female</i>	2200	51.50	28.70				

The level significance of 0.05

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The calculated t of 0.89 is less than the t - tabulated of 1.96. This means there is no significant difference between Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Self-Reliance and Self-Employment of Youth Corps-members through Capacity Building and Employment for Sustainable Development in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Table 4.2: Test of Significance of the Perception of Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Self-Reliance and Self-Employment of Youth Corps-members through Capacity Building and Employment for Sustainable Development in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Figure 4.2: Perception of Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Self-Reliance and Self-Employment of Youth Corps-members through Capacity Building and Employment for Sustainable Development in Oyo State, Nigeria

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Tc</i>	<i>Tt</i>	<i>Df</i>	Decision
<i>Art Students</i>	200	31.65	23.45	1.20	1.96	498	NS
<i>Science students</i>	300	61.23	30.18				

The level of significance of 0.05

The calculated t of 1.20 is less than the t - tabulated of 1.96. This means there is no significant difference between Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Self-Reliance and Self-Employment of Youth Corps-members through Capacity Building and Employment for Sustainable Development in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Results of Findings

The results of the study show that: There is no significant difference between Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Self-Reliance and Self-Employment of Youth Corps-members through Capacity Building and Employment for Sustainable Development in Oyo State, Nigeria. There is no significant difference between Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition and Self-Reliance and Self-Employment of Youth Corps-members through Capacity Building and Employment for Sustainable Development in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

It was discovered that entrepreneurship education is a potent tool in reducing unemployment in Nigeria. This is in line with the findings of Paul (2015), who agrees that entrepreneurship education is capable of reducing unemployment since it can help in the creation of wealth. The result of the finding also shows that Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition guarantees Self-Reliance and Self-Employment of Youth Corps-members through Capacity Building and Employment for Sustainable Development in Oyo State, Nigeria. This agrees with the discoveries of Nwangwu (2017).

Conclusion

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training was deficient in the sense that it failed to tackle permanently the issues and challenges of self-reliance and self-employment for the participants at the National Youth Service Corps, especially those who undergo the Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development programme anchored by the Directorate of Skill Acquisition and



Entrepreneurship Development. In spite of the ever-increasing number of Higher Educational Institutions and their graduates, Nigeria is still battling with the problems of unemployment, poverty and economic retardation. The Higher Educational Institutions curriculum was in the past, oriented towards making graduates suitable only for white-collar jobs. This underscores why millions of our youths and a lot of Higher Educational Institutions graduates roam about the streets of the major cities and towns in search of non-existing white-collar jobs. They are “job seekers instead of being job creators”. Due to this dangerous scenario, it is necessary and possible to position Nigerian Higher Educational Institutions to stimulate decent work and economic growth through a deliberate agenda of the production of creative and innovative graduates that has undergone entrepreneurship skills acquisition. Hence, the essence of the Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development programme is anchored by the Directorate of Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development for the corp-members during their service year in National Youth Service Corps. In conclusion, Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition is believed to afford the learners the right skills, knowledge, competencies and capacity needed for them to take their rightful place as progressive and economic citizens of the society contributing to Gross Domestic Product. The era of corp-members picking up their educational and National Youth Corp Service certificates, and looking for white collar jobs that are not readily available should be jettisoned. The aims and objectives of Nigeria Educational System at all levels, especially at tertiary institutions is to produce graduates who have the skills, competencies, capacities, knowledge and abilities to create and provide jobs for themselves and others, and to create wealth for everyone in the system. Therefore, the way out for this developmental issue is to encourage commitment to Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development of National Youth Service Corps under the Directorate. The Directorate should be provided with funding and capacity training and re-training of staff therein.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that the government should adequately fund, plan, implement, and manage Entrepreneurship Skills Development programmes in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This will make tertiary institutions to be fully equipped in terms of infrastructures, training facilities and manpower needed to bosting Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development programmes.

For Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition of Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development in the National Youth Service Corp to be a catalyst for youth employment and wealth creation, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Academics, facilitators and instructors in the area of Entrepreneurship Skill Acquisition (ESA) should be trained and retrained to keep abreast of new frontiers in the concept of subject-matter;
2. Capacity training regularly for skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development of all academics, facilitators and instructors on entrepreneurship skill development should be encouraged periodically;
3. These personnel should be sponsored to attend local and international conferences, seminars, symposiums, trade shows, exhibitions and workshops to acquire more knowledge out of classroom or workshop so that they can effectively transfer entrepreneurial skills to the corp members and turn knowledge and skills into business;
4. The government at the local, state and federal levels must be ready to fund entrepreneurship skills acquisition activities since finance is one of the major issues hindering entrepreneurial skills acquisition in the NYSC



programmes;

5. Government, individuals, and NGO's should try as much as possible to review and finance businesses derived by corp-members who have acquired skills in different vocations to enable them to start their own businesses right from the service year if they want to be self-reliant.
6. The various NYSC managements should contact some Non-Governmental Organisations or banks to give soft loans/grants to entrepreneurship educators to establish and run their own businesses. This will enable them to acquire practical experience from their own initiatives for onward transmission to the corp members.
7. As we are in a technological era, corp-members should be thoroughly taught how to start businesses, register businesses, fund businesses, recruit staff for the businesses, and market their businesses' products and services and other related steps in business management. They should also be provided with adequate capacity training about starting a new business and about business trends in order to maximize future risks and maximize success rates.
8. The Directorate of Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development of the National Youth Service Corps should mandatorily be established Alumni body or Forum of all corp members who have passed through the Directorate and should constantly organize workshops where the Alumni will train the corp members and relay testimonies.
9. Corp-members should be mandated to go for an internship with a successful master's crafts persons and entrepreneurs for at least a period of three months. This will also help them to practically acquire entrepreneurial skills that will enable them initiate, establish and run their businesses after during and participation in the NYSC program.
10. The gain of Entrepreneurship Education should be publicized through various social media platforms such as radio, television and other social media sites.

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