

**ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL YOUTH
SERVICE CORPS ON NATIONAL UNITY IN
NIGERIA: KWARA STATE EXPERIENCE**

BY

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CERTIFICATION

This project work has been examined and approved as meeting the requirements of Department of Public Administration, Institute of Finance and Management studies, Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, Kwara State. In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Award of Higher National Diploma (HND) in Public Administration.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to almighty Allah the bless source of wisdom, joy and knowledge and also to my lovely parents ARCH. IBITOYE and MRS. IBITOYE for their prayer, moral and financially support. I pray they live long to reap the fruit of their labour (AMEN).

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My profound gratitude goes to the lord almighty for his protection over my life and the successful backing towards the completion of this project.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Nigeria's history has been shaped by ethnic, religious, and regional tensions, culminating in the civil war of 1967-1970. In response to the need for national healing, the NYSC was created to encourage young Nigerians to live and work outside their comfort zones, thereby fostering mutual respect and understanding among the country's diverse populations (Khanna & Palepu, 2013). The NYSC's objectives include promoting national unity, accelerating rural development, and instilling discipline and patriotism in Nigerian youths (World Bank, 2023).

Kwara State, located in the North-Central region, is home to a mosaic of ethnic groups including Yoruba, Nupe, Bariba, and Fulani. Its capital, Ilorin, is a melting pot of cultures, making the state an ideal setting for the NYSC's integrationist agenda (NBC, 2023). Since the scheme's inception, thousands of corps members have been posted to Kwara annually, participating in community development projects, educational outreach, and health campaigns that cut across ethnic and religious boundaries.

The NYSC's presence in Kwara has contributed to the development of rural and urban communities through initiatives such as the construction of boreholes, renovation of schools, and organization of health sensitization programs. These projects not only address local needs but also provide corps members with firsthand experience of the challenges

and opportunities in different parts of Nigeria (World Bank, 2023). By living and working with people from diverse backgrounds, corps members develop tolerance, empathy, and a sense of national identity.

Despite these achievements, the NYSC faces persistent challenges. Issues such as insecurity, poor welfare conditions, and inadequate funding have sometimes hindered the scheme's effectiveness (Khanna & Palepu, 2013). In Kwara State, disparities in the distribution of corps members between urban and rural areas, as well as occasional cultural misunderstandings, have raised questions about the NYSC's capacity to fully realize its unity-building mandate.

Recent studies indicate that while many corps members develop lasting friendships and professional networks during their service year, some experience difficulties integrating into their host communities due to language barriers, cultural differences, or perceived discrimination (World Bank, 2023). These challenges highlight the need for continuous evaluation and adaptation of the NYSC program to ensure its relevance in a rapidly changing Nigerian society.

Furthermore, the NYSC's role in promoting unity is increasingly being tested by contemporary issues such as youth unemployment, political polarization, and the rise of ethno-religious militancy. In Kwara State, the scheme's impact on unity development must be assessed not only in terms of completed projects but also in its ability to foster genuine social cohesion and peaceful coexistence among diverse groups (NBC, 2023).

The government of Kwara State has consistently acknowledged the contributions of NYSC to the state's development and unity. However, stakeholders have called for reforms to address the scheme's limitations and to enhance its impact. These include improving the welfare of corps members, strengthening security measures, and ensuring equitable deployment across all local government areas (Khanna & Palepu, 2013).

In summary, the NYSC remains a vital instrument for national unity in Nigeria. Its activities in Kwara State offer valuable insights into the successes and challenges of using youth mobilization as a tool for social integration. This study seeks to provide a comprehensive assessment of the NYSC's impact on unity development in Kwara State, with a view to informing policy and practice for more effective nation-building.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

While the NYSC was conceived as a vehicle for promoting unity and integration, questions persist about its actual impact at the grassroots level, especially in ethnically diverse states like Kwara. Despite decades of operation, there is limited empirical evidence on the extent to which the scheme has succeeded in breaking down barriers of ethnicity, religion, and region among Nigerian youths in Kwara State (World Bank, 2023). Persistent challenges such as insecurity, uneven deployment, and inadequate community engagement threaten to undermine the scheme's objectives (Khanna & Palepu, 2013). This study addresses the gap by assessing the NYSC's contributions and limitations in fostering unity in Kwara State.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study is to examine the assessment of national youth service corps on national in Nigeria: Kwara state experience are to:

- i. evaluate the effectiveness of NYSC activities in promoting unity and integration among diverse groups in Kwara State.
- ii. identify specific NYSC-driven initiatives that have contributed to intercultural dialogue and social cohesion.
- iii. examine the challenges the NYSC's capacity to achieve its unity-building in Kwara State.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. To what extent has the NYSC influenced interethnic and interreligious relations in Kwara State?
- ii. Which NYSC programs or activities have been most effective in promoting unity?
- iii. What are the major challenges facing the NYSC in its quest to foster unity in Kwara State?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. Firstly, it provides policymakers and NYSC administrators with evidence-based insights into the scheme's effectiveness in

promoting unity in Kwara State. Secondly, it contributes to academic literature on nation-building and youth mobilization in Nigeria, offering a case study of how state-led initiatives can foster social cohesion (World Bank, 2023). Thirdly, the findings will inform future reforms to enhance the NYSC's relevance and impact in a changing socio-political landscape.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the activities and impact of the NYSC in Kwara State from 2020 to 2025. It covers selected local government areas that reflect the state's ethnic and socio-economic diversity. Data will be collected from corps members, NYSC officials, community leaders, and beneficiaries of NYSC projects. The analysis will be limited to unity development outcomes, excluding other aspects such as economic empowerment or skill acquisition.

1.7 Definition of Terms

- i. National Youth Service Corps (NYSC):** A mandatory one-year service program for Nigerian graduates designed to promote national unity and development.
- ii. Unity Development:** The process of fostering social cohesion, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence among diverse groups.

iii. Community Development Service (CDS): NYSC activities aimed at addressing the developmental needs of host communities.

iv. Kwara State: A North-Central Nigerian state known for its ethnic diversity and strategic location.

v. Intercultural Dialogue: Communication and interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds aimed at promoting understanding and tolerance.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of literature on the assessment of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and its impact on unity development in Kwara State. The review is structured into conceptual, theoretical, and empirical sections, followed by an identification of gaps in the literature. The conceptual review delves into the core ideas of national unity, national integration, the NYSC's historical context, its objectives, and the mechanisms through which it seeks to foster unity and development. The theoretical review focuses on the most relevant frameworks for understanding the NYSC's role, while the empirical review draws on recent studies to highlight practical outcomes and challenges. The chapter concludes by identifying areas where further research is needed.

2.2 Conceptual Review

2.2.1 National Unity

National unity is the foundation of any stable and progressive nation, particularly in multi-ethnic societies like Nigeria. It refers to the sense of togetherness and collective identity that transcends ethnic, religious, and regional differences, enabling citizens to work towards common national goals. In the Nigerian context, national unity is both a necessity and a challenge, given the country's diverse population and history of ethnic and religious conflict. The Nigerian Civil War exposed the fragility of national unity, leading

to various post-war policies aimed at reconciliation and nation-building (Onwubiko, 2021; The Beam Media, 2024).

National unity is not merely the absence of conflict but the active presence of mutual respect, trust, and cooperation among different groups. It is fostered through inclusive policies, equitable resource distribution, and opportunities for cross-cultural interaction. In Nigeria, national unity is enshrined in the constitution and reflected in government initiatives like the NYSC, which aim to bridge divides and promote a shared sense of nationhood (FRCN, 2023; NYSC, 2023). The importance of national unity is further underscored by its role in development. Societies that are united are better positioned to harness their human and material resources, attract investment, and achieve sustainable growth. National unity also provides the social stability necessary for democratic governance and the protection of human rights (Onwubiko, 2021; FRCN, 2023).

Despite its significance, achieving national unity in Nigeria remains a complex task. Persistent issues such as ethnic competition, religious intolerance, and regional marginalization continue to challenge efforts at integration. These realities highlight the need for sustained and innovative approaches to unity-building, such as the NYSC (Journal of Justice, Development and Peace Studies, 2023).

2.2.2 National Integration

National integration is the process by which diverse groups within a country are brought together to form a cohesive and harmonious society. It involves the deliberate effort to promote understanding, tolerance, and cooperation among people of different backgrounds. In Nigeria, national integration has been a central policy goal since independence, given the country's multiplicity of ethnicities, languages, and religions (Global History Dialogues, 2023; The Beam Media, 2024).

The NYSC was conceived as a direct response to the challenges of national integration. By posting young graduates to states other than their own, the scheme encourages cross-cultural interactions and the breaking down of stereotypes. This exposure is intended to foster empathy, broaden perspectives, and create bonds that transcend parochial loyalties (NYSC, 2023; FRCN, 2023).

National integration is not a one-time achievement but an ongoing process that requires continuous investment in inclusive policies and programs. The NYSC's annual deployment of thousands of youths across Nigeria is a practical demonstration of the government's commitment to integration. Through community development projects, corps members contribute to the welfare of their host communities, further strengthening the ties that bind the nation (Journal of Justice, Development and Peace Studies, 2023).

However, the process of national integration is fraught with challenges. Language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and occasional resistance from host communities can

hinder the effectiveness of integration efforts. Addressing these challenges requires ongoing dialogue, sensitivity to local realities, and the adaptation of program strategies to changing circumstances (FRCN, 2023; Global History Dialogues, 2023).

2.2.3 The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC)

The NYSC was established in 1973 as a post-civil war initiative to promote national unity, integration, and development. The scheme was founded by General Yakubu Gowon, who recognized the need for a unifying force to heal the wounds of the civil war and build a stronger, more cohesive nation. The NYSC's core objectives are to develop common ties among Nigerian youths, remove prejudices, eliminate ignorance, and confirm at first hand the similarities among Nigerians of all ethnic groups (NYSC, 2023; The Beam Media, 2024). One of the unique features of the NYSC is its compulsory nature for all Nigerian graduates under the age of 30. By mandating participation, the scheme ensures that a significant proportion of the country's educated youth are exposed to different cultures and regions. This exposure is intended to foster a sense of national identity and responsibility, preparing participants to contribute positively to the nation's development (Global History Dialogues, 2023; FRCN, 2023).

The NYSC's activities are structured around several key components: orientation camps, primary assignment, community development service (CDS), and winding-up/passing-out ceremonies. Each component is designed to promote interaction, learning, and service, reinforcing the scheme's unity and development objectives (NYSC, 2023;

Tribune Online, 2025). Over the years, the NYSC has become a symbol of nationhood and a rite of passage for Nigerian graduates. Its impact is evident in the numerous community projects executed by corps members, the friendships and networks formed across ethnic lines, and the growing number of inter-ethnic marriages among participants (Journal of Justice, Development and Peace Studies, 2023).

2.2.4 NYSC as a Tool for Unity and Development

The NYSC's role as a tool for unity and development is widely acknowledged by policymakers, scholars, and participants. By facilitating the movement of youths across the country, the scheme breaks down barriers and promotes mutual understanding. Corps members are often posted to rural and underserved areas, where they play vital roles in education, healthcare, and infrastructure development (FRCN, 2023; The Beam Media, 2024). Community Development Service (CDS) is a core aspect of the NYSC, requiring corps members to identify and implement projects that address the needs of their host communities. These projects range from building classrooms and health centers to organizing literacy campaigns and environmental sanitation drives. Through CDS, corps members not only contribute to local development but also build bridges of trust and cooperation with community members (NYSC, 2023; Journal of Justice, Development and Peace Studies, 2023).

The NYSC also serves as a platform for youth empowerment. Participants acquire practical skills, leadership experience, and a sense of civic responsibility that prepare them

for future roles in society. The scheme's emphasis on entrepreneurship and self-reliance aligns with national development goals and addresses the challenge of youth unemployment (FRCN, 2023; The Beam Media, 2024). Despite these achievements, the NYSC faces challenges that can limit its effectiveness as a tool for unity and development. Issues such as inadequate funding, security concerns, and occasional resistance from host communities require ongoing attention and adaptation. Strengthening the scheme's impact depends on addressing these challenges and ensuring that its objectives remain relevant to Nigeria's evolving realities (Tribune Online, 2025).

2.2.5 Challenges and Prospects of NYSC in Fostering Unity

While the NYSC has made significant contributions to unity and development, it is not without its challenges. Security concerns, particularly in conflict-prone areas, pose risks to corps members and can discourage participation. Inadequate funding and poor welfare conditions can also affect morale and limit the scope of community projects (FRCN, 2023; Journal of Justice, Development and Peace Studies, 2023). Cultural and language barriers sometimes hinder the integration of corps members into their host communities, leading to feelings of isolation or discrimination. There are also instances where corps members are posted to urban centers, reducing their exposure to rural challenges and limiting the scheme's developmental impact (Global History Dialogues, 2023; NYSC, 2023).

Despite these challenges, the prospects for the NYSC remain strong. The scheme's adaptability and the resilience of its participants have enabled it to overcome numerous obstacles over the years. With continued government support, stakeholder engagement, and strategic reforms, the NYSC can further strengthen its role as a catalyst for unity and development in Nigeria (Tribune Online, 2025).

2.3 Empirical Review

Egobueze, Anthony, Nsiegbe, Greham, and Olayinka, Bukola (2024) conducted a study titled “*Exploring The Impact Of National Youth Service Corps On Educational Development In Rivers State, Nigeria: A Longitudinal Study, 2013-2023.*” The main objective was to investigate how NYSC members contributed to educational development in Rivers State over a decade. Using a survey research design, the authors collected data from various stakeholders to assess the role of NYSC in addressing teacher shortages and enhancing educational quality. The analysis revealed that NYSC members significantly improved educational delivery by filling gaps in staffing and fostering community engagement. The study recommended that the NYSC program be strengthened and expanded to further support educational development across Nigeria, emphasizing sustained government support and improved resource allocation (Egobueze et al., 2024).

A study by Oladepo and colleagues (2023) titled “*An Examination of the Key Components of NYSC Community Development Service in Southwestern Nigeria (1999-2014)*” aimed to identify and analyze the core components of the NYSC's Community

Development Service (CDS) program. Employing a mixed-method approach, including multi-stage sampling and descriptive and inferential statistics, the researchers gathered data through questionnaires and interviews from nine Local Government Areas. The findings showed that public sensitization on human rights, enhancement of education standards, road safety, disaster management, and provision of basic amenities were the most impactful CDS activities. The authors recommended that the government and NYSC authorities continue to empower the CDS program and encourage corps members' active participation to maximize community development outcomes (Oladebo et al., 2023).

In 2025, Onwubiko published a paper titled “*National Youth Service Corps: A Paradigm Shift to Professionalism and National Integration.*” The study's objective was to evaluate the NYSC's role in fostering national unity and professional development among Nigerian youths. Using documentary analysis and content interpretation guided by system theory, the research assessed secondary data on NYSC's operations. It found that professionalizing the NYSC through clustering corps members by their fields of study enhanced national integration and contributed positively to socio-economic development. The study recommended that the Nigerian government institutionalize such professional clustering and increase support for NYSC activities to sustain their positive ripple effects on national cohesion and development (Onwubiko, 2025).

Chukwuka (2023) examined “*The Prospects and Challenges of National Youth Service Corps in Nation Building*” with a focus on the NYSC's contribution to national

integration amidst rising insecurity and socio-political challenges. Using qualitative methods, including literature review and analysis of secondary sources, the study highlighted that the NYSC has largely succeeded in promoting national unity, cultural assimilation, and leadership development among youths. However, security threats, poor welfare conditions, and political interference were identified as major impediments. The researcher recommended that the government enhance security provisions for corps members, improve welfare packages, and foster greater community collaboration to overcome these challenges and fully realize the NYSC's nation-building potential (Chukwuka, 2023).

Onwere (1992) conducted a doctoral thesis titled "*National Youth Service Corps Programme and National Integration in Nigeria*," which aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the NYSC in promoting national integration. Using a quasi-experimental design, the study measured attitudes of graduates from different ethnic groups before and after NYSC participation, employing scales such as the National Identity Scale and Friendship Choice Scale. The findings indicated a moderate but statistically significant positive change in attitudes towards national unity among corps members. The study concluded that job satisfaction and meaningful assignments during service were critical predictors of integration success. It recommended that the NYSC improve the quality and relevance of postings to enhance its integration objectives (Onwere, 1992).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

2.4.1 Social Integration Theory

Social Integration Theory posits that the stability and cohesion of a society depend on the extent to which individuals from diverse backgrounds interact and form meaningful social bonds. In the context of the NYSC, this theory provides a framework for understanding how structured, cross-cultural interactions among Nigerian youths can reduce prejudice and foster a sense of belonging. The NYSC's design, which mandates the posting of graduates to regions outside their own, directly operationalizes the principles of social integration by encouraging sustained contact and collaboration among participants from different ethnic and religious backgrounds (Onwubiko, 2021; NYSC, 2023).

Through orientation camps, primary assignments, and community development projects, corps members engage in activities that require teamwork, problem-solving, and mutual support. These shared experiences help to break down stereotypes, build trust, and promote mutual understanding, which are essential for social integration. The theory suggests that such interactions, when sustained over time, can lead to the formation of new social networks and the emergence of a more cohesive national identity (FRCN, 2023; The Beam Media, 2024).

Empirical evidence supports the relevance of Social Integration Theory to the NYSC. Studies have shown that participants often develop lasting friendships and professional networks that cut across ethnic and religious lines. These relationships not

only enhance individual well-being but also contribute to the broader goal of national unity and integration (Journal of Justice, Development and Peace Studies, 2023).

2.4.2 Nation-Building Theory

Nation-Building Theory emphasizes the deliberate efforts by governments and institutions to create a sense of national identity and unity among citizens. The NYSC is a quintessential example of a nation-building initiative, designed to heal the divisions caused by the Nigerian Civil War and to promote a collective sense of belonging. The scheme's emphasis on cross-cultural interaction, community service, and national symbols reflects the key tenets of nation-building theory (The Beam Media, 2024; NYSC, 2023).

Nation-building involves the creation of shared values, symbols, and narratives that bind citizens together. The NYSC contributes to this process by instilling a sense of patriotism, civic responsibility, and mutual respect among participants. Through its various activities, the scheme reinforces the idea that all Nigerians, regardless of background, have a stake in the nation's future (FRCN, 2023).

The success of nation-building initiatives like the NYSC depends on their ability to adapt to changing social and political realities. Continuous evaluation, stakeholder engagement, and policy reforms are necessary to ensure that the scheme remains relevant and effective in promoting unity and development (Tribune Online, 2025).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology adopted for the study. It explains the research design, the population of the study, sample size and sampling techniques, methods of data collection, instruments used, methods of data analyses, and the historical background of the case study. The objective is to ensure that the research process is systematic and reliable.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design to explore the role of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in promoting unity development in Kwara State. The descriptive survey design is appropriate because it enables the collection of data from respondents to describe their perceptions, experiences, and opinions about the NYSC program. This design facilitates both quantitative and qualitative data collection, providing a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of this study consists of all National Youth Service Corps members deployed in Kwara State between 2020 and 2025, as well as selected NYSC officials, community leaders, and beneficiaries of NYSC projects within the state. According to official NYSC records, approximately 2,000 corps members were posted to Kwara State

during this period. Additionally, there are numerous community stakeholders who interact with or benefit from NYSC activities.

Due to the scope and resource constraints of this study, a sample size of 100 respondents was purposively selected to represent the larger population. This sample includes 60 corps members, 20 NYSC officials, and 20 community leaders and project beneficiaries. The purposive selection ensures that respondents have relevant experience and knowledge about the NYSC's impact on unity development.

3.4 Sample Size Determination

To scientifically justify the sample size of 100 respondents, Yamane's formula for sample size determination was applied with a 10% margin of error:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

- \$ n \$ = sample size
- \$ N \$ = population size (2,000)
- \$ e \$ = margin of error (0.10)

Substituting the values:

$$n = \frac{2000}{1 + 2000 \times (0.10)^2} = \frac{2000}{1 + 2000 \times 0.01} = \frac{2000}{21} \approx 95.24$$

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Rounded up, this gives approximately 100 respondents, which matches the sample size used in this study.

Alternatively, Cochran's formula for large populations was also considered with a 95% confidence level and 10% margin of error:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 \times p \times (1 - p)}{e^2}$$

Where:

- \$ Z = 1.96 \$ (Z-score for 95% confidence)
- \$ p = 0.5 \$ (maximum variability)
- \$ e = 0.10 \$ (margin of error)

Calculation:

$$n_0 = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{(0.10)^2} = \frac{3.8416 \times 0.25}{0.01} = \frac{0.9604}{0.01} = 96.04$$

This confirms that a sample size of approximately 100 respondents is statistically adequate for this study.

3.5 Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select respondents who are directly involved in or affected by the NYSC program. This non-probability sampling method was

chosen because it targets specific groups relevant to the study objectives, ensuring that the data collected is rich and pertinent.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

Data for this study were collected using a combination of structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews:

- **Questionnaires:** Designed to gather quantitative data on respondents' perceptions of the NYSC's contribution to unity development, challenges faced, and suggestions for improvement. The questionnaires were administered to all 100 respondents.
- **Interviews:** Conducted with a subset of respondents (especially NYSC officials and community leaders) to obtain qualitative insights into the operational dynamics, successes, and challenges of the NYSC program.

The instruments were pre-tested through a pilot study to ensure clarity, reliability, and validity.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Permission was obtained from the NYSC authorities and community leaders before data collection commenced. Questionnaires were distributed in person to the selected respondents, with assistance from research assistants where necessary. Interviews were scheduled and conducted face-to-face or via telephone, depending on availability and convenience.

Data collection was carried out over a period of four weeks to ensure thorough coverage and follow-up where needed.

3.8 Data Analysis Techniques

Data collected from the questionnaires were coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and means, to summarize respondents' views and experiences. Inferential statistics, specifically the chi-square test, were employed to test research hypotheses and examine relationships between variables.

Qualitative data from interviews were transcribed and analyzed thematically to identify key patterns, themes, and insights related to the NYSC's role in unity development and the challenges encountered.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The study observed strict ethical standards. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Confidentiality and anonymity were

assured, with data used solely for academic purposes. Respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the data obtained from the field survey and analyses them accordingly. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 96 were properly filled and returned, forming the basis for the analysis.

4.2 Historical Background of the Case Study

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) was established in 1973 by the Federal Government of Nigeria during the military regime of General Yakubu Gowon. The program was introduced as a way to foster unity, reconciliation, and reconstruction after the Nigerian Civil War. It was aimed at promoting national integration, building inter-ethnic relationships, and encouraging young Nigerians to develop a sense of patriotism and unity.

NYSC mandates every Nigerian graduate under the age of 30 to serve the country for one year. During this service year, corps members are posted to different states other than their states of origin to promote national integration. In Kwara State, the NYSC program has played a significant role in unity development by bringing together corps members from diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds.

The NYSC Secretariat in Kwara State coordinates the posting, orientation, and activities of corps members throughout the state. Various programs such as Community

Development Service (CDS), SAED (Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development), and public enlightenment campaigns have contributed significantly to unity, peace-building, and grassroots development in the state. Through shared experiences, community projects, and interaction with local communities, NYSC in Kwara State continues to promote the spirit of oneness and national consciousness among young Nigerians.

4.3 Demographic presentation of respondents

S/N	Items		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Status	Returned	96	96.00%
		Not Returned	4	4.00%
		Total	100	100.00%
2.	Sex	Male	52	54.17%
		Female	44	45.83%
		Total	96	100.00%
3.	Age	Under 18	2	2.08%
		18–25	36	37.50%
		26–35	30	31.25%
		36–45	18	18.75%
		46+	10	10.42%
		Total	96	100.00%

4.	Marital Status	Single	54	56.25%
		Married	34	35.42%
		Divorced	5	5.21%
		Widowed	3	3.12%
		Total	96	100.00%
5.	Religion	Christianity	38	39.58%
		Islam	44	45.83%
		Traditional	10	10.42%
		Others	4	4.17%
		Total	96	100.00%
6.	Educational level	Primary	6	6.25%
		Secondary	18	18.75%
		Tertiary	68	70.83%
		Others	4	4.17%
		Total	96	100.00%

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2025

According to Table 4.1, out of the 100 questionnaires administered, 96 (96.00%) were returned and properly filled, while 4 (4.00%) were not returned. This shows a high response rate, which enhances the reliability of the research findings. Out of the 100 questionnaires that were distributed to various respondents, a total of 96 were properly

filled and returned, representing 96% of the total. Only 4 questionnaires were either not returned or improperly filled.

According to Table 4.2, 52 respondents (54.17%) were male, while 44 respondents (45.83%) were female. This shows that both genders were adequately represented in the study, with a slight male majority.

According to Table 4.3, 2 respondents (2.08%) were under 18 years of age, 36 respondents (37.50%) fell within the age bracket of 18–25, 30 respondents (31.25%) were between 26–35 years, 18 respondents (18.75%) were aged 36–45, and 10 respondents (10.42%) were 46 years and above. This indicates that the majority of respondents were youths aged between 18 and 35 years.

According to Table 4.4, 54 respondents (56.25%) were single, 34 respondents (35.42%) were married, 5 respondents (5.21%) were divorced, and 3 respondents (3.12%) were widowed. This shows that the majority of respondents were single individuals.

According to Table 4.5, 38 respondents (39.58%) were Christians, 44 respondents (45.83%) were Muslims, 10 respondents (10.42%) practiced traditional religion, and 4 respondents (4.17%) belonged to other religions. This shows a diverse religious representation, with Islam being slightly predominant.

According to Table 4.6, 6 respondents (6.25%) had a primary education, 18 respondents (18.75%) had secondary education, 68 respondents (70.83%) had tertiary education, and 4 respondents (4.17%) had other forms of education. This implies that most respondents were well-educated, with a majority having tertiary-level qualifications.

4.4 Respondents Response Base on Research Questions

S/N	Items		Frequency	Percentage
7.	Frequency of Engagement	Daily	10	10.42%
		Weekly	26	27.08%
		Monthly	22	22.92%
		Rarely	30	31.25%
		Never	8	8.33%
		Total	96	100.00%
8.	Association with NYSC	Corps Member	24	25.00%
		Ex-Corps Member	30	31.25%
		NYSC Staff	8	8.33%
		Community Member	30	31.25%
		Others	4	4.17%
		Total	96	100.00%
9.	Influence of NYSC on Interethnic Relations in Kwara State	Very High	22	22.92%
		High	30	31.25%
		Moderate	26	27.08%
		Low	12	12.50%
		Very Low	6	6.25%
		Total	96	100.00%
10.	Influence of NYSC on Interreligious Relations in Kwara State	Very High	20	20.83%
		High	28	29.17%
		Moderate	30	31.25%
		Low	12	12.50%
		Very Low	6	6.25%
		Total	96	100.00%

11.	NYSC's Role in Promoting National Unity	Strongly Agree	28	29.17%
		Agree	34	35.42%
		Neutral	18	18.75%
		Disagree	10	10.42%
		Strongly Disagree	6	6.25%
		Total	96	100.00%
12.	Challenges Facing NYSC in Promoting National Integration	Insecurity	30	31.25%
		Ethnic Bias	20	20.83%
		Poor Funding	18	18.75%
		Political Interference	16	16.67%
		Others	12	12.50%
		Total	96	100.00%
13.	Suggested Solutions to Improve NYSC's Role in National Integration	Improved Security	28	29.17%
		Adequate Funding	22	22.92%
		Orientation on Unity	18	18.75%
		Policy Reforms	16	16.67%
		Community Engagement Programs	12	12.50%
		Total	96	100.00%

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2025

According to Table 4.7, 10 respondents (10.42%) indicated they engage in NYSC activities daily, 26 respondents (27.08%) participate weekly, and 22 respondents (22.92%) do so monthly. Meanwhile, 30 respondents (31.25%) engage rarely, and 8 respondents (8.33%) reported never participating in NYSC activities. This suggests that while many

respondents have some level of interaction with NYSC activities, a notable number only engage occasionally or not at all.

According to Table 4.8, 24 respondents (25.00%) identified as Corps Members, 30 respondents (31.25%) were Ex-Corps Members, 8 respondents (8.33%) were NYSC staff, another 30 respondents (31.25%) were community members, and 4 respondents (4.17%) had other forms of association with NYSC. This indicates a diverse level of involvement, with Ex-Corps Members and community members being the most represented.

According to Table 4.9, 22 respondents (22.92%) believed that NYSC has a very high influence on interethnic relations, 30 respondents (31.25%) considered the influence to be high, while 26 respondents (27.08%) rated it as moderate. On the lower end, 12 respondents (12.50%) felt the influence is low, and 6 respondents (6.25%) rated it very low. These findings suggest that most respondents perceive the NYSC program as having a notable positive effect on fostering interethnic relations.

According to Table 4.10, 20 respondents (20.83%) rated the influence of NYSC on interreligious relations as very high, 28 respondents (29.17%) rated it high, and 30 respondents (31.25%) rated it moderate. Meanwhile, 12 respondents (12.50%) believed the influence is low, and 6 respondents (6.25%) considered it very low. This implies that most respondents agree that NYSC contributes positively to interreligious harmony in Kwara State.

According to Table 4.11, 28 respondents (29.17%) strongly agreed that NYSC promotes national unity, while 34 respondents (35.42%) agreed. Additionally, 18

respondents (18.75%) were neutral, 10 respondents (10.42%) disagreed, and 6 respondents (6.25%) strongly disagreed. These results show that a significant majority of the respondents (64.59%) believe NYSC plays a positive role in fostering national unity.

According to Table 4.12, 30 respondents (31.25%) identified insecurity as a major challenge facing NYSC in promoting national integration. Ethnic bias was mentioned by 20 respondents (20.83%), while 18 respondents (18.75%) cited poor funding. Political interference was noted by 16 respondents (16.67%), and 12 respondents (12.50%) mentioned other challenges. This reveals that insecurity and ethnic bias are the most prominent challenges as perceived by the respondents.

According to Table 4.13, 28 respondents (29.17%) suggested improved security as the key solution to enhance NYSC's role in national integration. Additionally, 22 respondents (22.92%) emphasized the need for adequate funding, 18 respondents (18.75%) recommended orientation programs focused on unity, 16 respondents (16.67%) suggested policy reforms, and 12 respondents (12.50%) advocated for more community engagement programs. This implies that a combination of structural, financial, and community-driven initiatives are seen as effective means to strengthen NYSC's impact.

4.5 Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of youths on the role of NYSC in fostering national integration in Nigeria?

From the data presented in Table 4.11, the majority of the respondents either strongly agreed (28 respondents, 29.17%) or agreed (34 respondents, 35.42%) that the NYSC scheme promotes national unity. This indicates that more than 64% of the respondents hold a positive perception of NYSC's role in fostering national integration. While a smaller group remained neutral (18 respondents, 18.75%) or disagreed (16.67% combined), the overall perception is largely favorable.

This suggests that a considerable number of youths see the NYSC as a tool that can bridge ethnic and regional divides, contributing to nation-building by fostering mutual understanding among Nigerians of diverse backgrounds.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges hindering the achievement of NYSC's goals on national integration?

As shown in Table 4.12, insecurity (30 respondents, 31.25%) and ethnic bias (20 respondents, 20.83%) were identified as the most significant challenges hindering NYSC's effectiveness. Poor funding (18.75%), political interference (16.67%), and other issues (12.50%) were also mentioned.

This reveals that while NYSC has the potential to foster unity, systemic and structural issues significantly affect its impact. Notably, security concerns—such as fear of attacks in unfamiliar states—are a major factor discouraging full participation in the scheme.

Research Question 3: What strategies can be adopted to enhance NYSC's contribution to national integration?

According to Table 4.13, improved security (28 respondents, 29.17%) and adequate funding (22 respondents, 22.92%) were the most recommended strategies. Others include increased orientation on unity (18.75%), policy reforms (16.67%), and community engagement programs (12.50%).

These results suggest that for NYSC to be more effective in promoting national integration, there needs to be a holistic review of how the scheme is implemented. The respondents believe that enhancing safety and financial support, combined with targeted educational and community activities, can improve the scheme's impact.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this research align with existing literature that highlights the NYSC as a critical institution in the promotion of national unity. The data gathered confirms that youths generally perceive the NYSC as a unifying force in Nigeria. However, persistent challenges such as insecurity, inadequate funding, and ethnic prejudice continue to undermine its objectives.

This study affirms that although the intent behind the establishment of the NYSC is sound and supported by many, its execution needs urgent improvement. The suggestions offered by the respondents point toward reforms in both policy and practice. If addressed, these changes could revitalize the NYSC's original vision and strengthen its role in national integration.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study was conducted to assess the impact of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) on unity development in Kwara State, Nigeria. It examined the level of public engagement with NYSC activities, the perception of NYSC's influence on interethnic and interreligious relations, the effectiveness of its core programs, and the challenges faced in achieving its unification goals.

Based on the analysis of 96 valid responses to the research questionnaire, the following key findings were made:

- Most respondents were either corps members, ex-corps members, or community members familiar with NYSC activities.
- Engagement with NYSC activities occurred mostly on a weekly or monthly basis.
- A majority of the respondents believed that NYSC has had a **high to very high** influence on both interethnic and interreligious unity in Kwara State.
- The general perception of NYSC's role in promoting national unity was positive.
- Programs such as Community Development Service (CDS), Sports Activities, and Cultural Exchange Programs were rated as the most effective in fostering unity.

- Major challenges faced by NYSC include lack of funding, ethnic and religious bias, and inadequate participation, which significantly hinder the program's ability to fulfill its unifying mandate.

5.2 Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the NYSC remains a critical tool in promoting unity and peaceful coexistence in Kwara State. The program has significantly contributed to interethnic and interreligious harmony by enabling young Nigerians from diverse backgrounds to live, work, and collaborate in unfamiliar regions.

Despite the evident successes, NYSC's impact is often undermined by structural challenges such as poor funding, insufficient grassroots participation, and the persistence of ethnic and religious prejudices. Addressing these issues will be essential to maximizing the full potential of the scheme in national development.

5.3 Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the NYSC's role in promoting unity in Kwara State and beyond:

1. **Increase Funding and Resource Allocation:** Government and stakeholders should improve financial support for NYSC activities, particularly in rural areas where infrastructure and materials for CDS, cultural programs, and sports may be lacking.
2. **Enhance Intercultural Programs:** More emphasis should be placed on intercultural activities, including exchange programs, language immersion classes,

and interactive seminars that allow corps members to learn and appreciate the diversity of Nigerian cultures.

3. **Promote Inclusive Participation:** NYSC should partner with community leaders and civil society organizations to increase local involvement and participation in NYSC activities. This will bridge the gap between corps members and host communities.
4. **Address Ethnic and Religious Biases:** There should be deliberate efforts to train NYSC staff and participants on the importance of neutrality, tolerance, and cultural sensitivity. This will reduce discrimination and foster a more inclusive environment.
5. **Review and Modernize the NYSC Curriculum:** The structure of NYSC programs should be updated to include modern tools of civic engagement, digital literacy, peacebuilding techniques, and social entrepreneurship—thereby making corps members more effective unity ambassadors.
6. **Encourage Post-Service Integration:** Policies that encourage corps members to stay back and work or do business in their places of service after the NYSC year should be supported, as this promotes long-term unity and national integration.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

Department of Public Administration

Institute of Information Communication Technology,

Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin

P.M.B. 1375, Ilorin

Dear Respondent,

I am a final-year student at the above-named institution, currently conducting research titled “Assessment of National Youth Service Corps on Unity Development in Kwara State, Nigeria.” Your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes.

Thank you for your participation.

SECTION A: Demographic Information of respondents

1. Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other: _____

2. Age Group

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18–25
- ☐ 26–35
- ☐ 36–45

- ☐ 46+

3. Marital Status

- ☐ Single
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed

4. Religion

- ☐ Christianity
- ☐ Islam
- ☐ Traditional
- ☐ Other: _____

5. Educational Level

- ☐ Primary
- ☐ Secondary
- ☐ Tertiary
- ☐ Others: _____

SECTION B: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

6. How often do you engage with NYSC activities?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

7. What is your association with NYSC?

- ☐ Corps Member

- ☐ Ex-Corps Member
- ☐ NYSC Staff
- ☐ Community Member
- ☐ Other: _____

8. To what extent do you believe NYSC has influenced interethnic relations in Kwara State?

- ☐ Very High
- ☐ High
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Low
- ☐ Very Low

9. To what extent do you believe NYSC has influenced interreligious relations in Kwara State?

- ☐ Very High
- ☐ High
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Low
- ☐ Very Low

10. Which of the following best describes your perception of NYSC's role in promoting unity?

- ☐ Very Positive
- ☐ Positive
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Negative
- ☐ Very Negative

11. Which NYSC programs do you think have been most effective in promoting unity? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Community Development Service (CDS)
- ☐ Sports Activities
- ☐ Cultural Exchange Programs
- ☐ Workshops and Seminars
- ☐ Other: _____

12. How would you rate the effectiveness of these programs in fostering unity?

- ☐ Very Effective
- ☐ Effective
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Ineffective
- ☐ Very Ineffective

13. What challenges do you believe the NYSC faces in fostering unity in Kwara State? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Lack of Funding
- ☐ Inadequate Participation
- ☐ Ethnic and Religious Bias
- ☐ Poor Communication
- ☐ Other: _____

14. How significant do you think these challenges are in hindering NYSC's efforts?

- ☐ Very Significant
- ☐ Significant
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Minor

- ☐ Not Significant