

Location, Gender And Students' Political Participation In Nigeria

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Abstract

Gender and attitude of students to political participation, and location of students as a factor influence political participation in Nigeria. Students' attitude, refers to the feelings, likes, dislikes, and aversions of an individual or a student. They could either be positive or negative. Gender is the cultural role assigned to male and female in society. It is different from sex that has to do with physiological or physical differences between males and females. Both males and females actively participated in elections and electoral process. However, several studies showed that males participate more in the electoral process compared to their female counterparts. Also, both males and females portrayed negative and positive attitude towards the political process This article looked at Social Studies and civic education, specifically how they might help students develop the correct democratic beliefs. The Edo people have long expressed unhappiness with government officials and lawmakers for failing to represent public opinion. There are additionally cases where people show up for voter registration but then fail to vote when the time arrives. Nigeria has long been hampered by electoral malpractices and other forms of electoral malfeasance, giving the perception that the teaching of social studies has not had a significant influence. The article investigated women's political engagement in Nigeria, school location, and students' attitude towards engaging in democratic processes, democratic mindset of the students' mind as a key hurdle to preserving democracy in Nigeria, moreover it was discovered that political education may have a considerable impact on students' attitudes regarding the application of law, election process, and political involvement (regardless of male or female and regardless of region).

Keywords: *Gender, Location, Political participation, women political participation*

Introduction

There is consensus amongst scholars and researchers on the fact that gender is a factor that affect attitude of students. Gender, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (8th Edition) refers to being male or female, particularly when viewed in terms of social and cultural distinctions rather than biological disparities: class, ethnicity, and gender. Gender is a socio-cultural

construct that categorises and organises social connections between men and women (Santos et al. 2006). It is the result of a social, historical, along with cultural procedure that evolves via behaviours, symbols, representations, social norms, and values that identify suitable roles for men and women in accordance with gender distinction. In contrast, sex refers to biologically determined anatomical and physiological traits. Sex takes into consideration biological and anatomical differences

between female and male while gender takes into consideration culturally and socially constructed differences between females and males (Tantengco, 2014).

According to Yetunde (2011), women make up a little over fifty percent of the human population worldwide and contribute more than half as much to social and economic progress as men do due to their dual responsibilities in the economic and reproductive domains; However, their involvement in formal political institutions and procedures, where choices about the use of society resources are made by both men and women across the world, is 18 percent (International Women's Centre, 2008). At both the national and international levels, there has been an increasing interest in women's political engagement. This is especially true now that it has been established that contributions to a country's growth are not gender-specific. This declaration supports Maryam's (2015) assertion that equality between men and women and women's empowerment are not just human rights, but also necessary for a just, equitable, as well as environmentally friendly development. The article was addressed in the subsequent subdivisions:

Women's Political Participation in Nigeria

School Location and Students' Attitude to Participate in Democratic Activities

Democratic Attitude of the students' Mind a Major Obstacle that Mars Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

Conclusion and Recommendations

Women's Political Participation in Nigeria

Women's political engagement is critical to

achieving these objectives, and party platforms constitute some of several essential organisations for encouraging and cultivating this type of engagement. As a result, gender equality and women's full involvement in decision-making are critical indices of democratic governance. In the words of Gberevbie and Oviasogie (2013), one of the distinguishing qualities of democracy is equitable involvement in decision-making impacting all segments of society. Scholars view the marginalisation of any individual from political participation based on gender categories as a rejection of the genuine ideals of democratic governance. Women and men shall have equal access to involvement as well as representation in all sectors and levels of public life.

Women's political engagement in Nigeria has varied all through the country's history. Women's political engagement in pre-colonial Nigerian communities was not comparable to that of males, but their role in traditional government was complementary rather than submissive. According to research, certain remarkable women had important roles in the government of their respective kingdoms, empires, and emirates prior to the introduction of colonisation in 1900. For example, the governance of pre-colonial society highlighted the exploits of women such as "Queen Daura of Daura Emirate in present-day Katsina State, Queen Amina of Zazzay, now Zaria of Zaria Emirate in present-day Kaduna, and Emotan of the famous Benin kingdom" (Gberevbie and Oviasogie, 2013).

Interestingly, colonialism marginalised women's active engagement in the Nigerian political structure. Erunke and Shaibu (2013) claim that gender bias in the electoral process in Nigeria may be traced back to the country's colonial history.

Thus, their interactions with Nigerians resembled the Western cultural idea of colonialism, which is based on masculine dominance. This was obvious in the Sir Hugh Clifford constitution of 1922, which was largely regarded as the first to establish the electoral element into pre-colonial Nigerian society. This disenfranchised women and restricted the involvement of adult males to the rich. According to Oni and Shegun (2012), these activities signalled the emergence of male dominance in politics as well as women's isolation from Nigeria's political mainstream. They also noted that four significant variables contribute to women's marginalisation in political involvement. Specifically, socioeconomic, cultural legacy, political bitterness, as well as institutional designs.

According to Maryam (2015), in 1999, the National Assembly had three (2.8%) female Senators and twelve "(3.3%) female House of Representative members. In 2003, four (3.7%) and twenty-one (5.8%) female members were elected to the Assembly." In 2007, the National Assembly included nine (8.3%) female senators and twenty-six (7.2%) female representatives. Gberevbie and Oviasogie (2013) found that no women won presidential or governorship elections. However, 27 (3.6%) of 360 House of Representative memberships are held by women, followed by 57 (5.8%) of 990 State House of Assembly seats, 27 (3.6%) of 740 local government chairperson posts, and 235 (3.7%) of 6,368 councillorship seats.

Apart from the political realm, there are gender differences in education and even in the academic performance of students in subjects such as social studies. Dania (2014) study revealed that males achieve higher than their female counterparts in social studies. To ensure that female and male

students are given their rightful place in the school programmes and activities, Nworgu (2005) argues that the entire field of education should be gender sensitive. In an empirical study on gender and academic achievement, Dania (2014) wraps up that a student's gender makes virtually no difference in their academic success. Similarly, Santos (2006) found that when the variable of sex is added to the equation, no substantial disparity in students' proficiency in mathematics is detected; however, when gender identity (without taking into account students' sex) is taken into account, substantial variations appear between genders favouring students (both boys and girls).

Dowse and Hughes (1972) argued that the system of education in a nation plays a significant role in instilling attitudes and values that can impact the type and extent of people's political conduct in society. This is where school comes in. The relationship between school officials and students, the pattern of relationships among students themselves, the subject matter of civic courses, and the overall organisation and administration of the school system all play important roles in instilling or hindering particular perspectives and mindsets regarding politics.

School Location and Students' Participation in Democratic Activities

According to Omoruyi (2010) people's engagement in their local issues is merely a reflection of their confidence in their own competence. Hence, the willingness and ability of the rural dwellers to participate and contribute meaningfully to the democratic process of their community is a function of the knowledge, orientation, awareness and information provided to participate in the act of governance. In support of this opinion, Idada and

Uhunmwuango (2012) stated that the rural dwellers are core and fundamental for the development of any meaningful democracy, as a consequence of socioeconomic justice and equal opportunity in society is a necessary prerequisite for democracy to function properly. To Oyedele (2006) democracy thrives where local dwellers are empowered and given the opportunity to freely stand for election and vote during elections to exercise their franchise. In other words, the rural dwellers are allowed to express their freedom of speech, right to public association and to freely vote the candidate of their choice without any manipulations by politicians to trade their democratic obligation.

According to Ojatorotu (2009), the final say lies with rural residents who are eligible to vote in the understanding that those charged with governance are supposed to be accountable to the electorate, while additionally being accountable allows those who vote to participate in their oversight for the intent of rewarding or punishing them, as both the former and the latter may come about in regime change by means of elections that are impartial and free. Therefore, guaranteeing a sustainable democracy means educating the local dwellers which gives them such power to determine good governance and credible leaders, enable them to exercise their civic rights, resist anti-political actions and respect for the rule of law.

School Location and Students' Attitude to Participate in Democratic Activities

School a site has been identified as one element influencing pupils' attitudes (Akpan, 2001). Over the last twenty years, research has shown that kids in rural regions have lower educational expectations than their urban counterparts (Haas, 1992; Stern, 1994; Kompits, 1996; Khattri, Riley, & Kane,

1997; Kannapel and De Young, 1999; Hu, 2003; Arnold, 2005). According to Haas (1992), such rural students may feel that "school isn't for me". Again, Abimbola (2007) observed that learners from urban schools outperformed those from rural areas.

Democratic Attitude of the Students' Mind a Major Obstacle that Mars Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

The problem has consistently been the absence of a democratic mindset, which has been the primary impediment to consolidating democracy in Nigeria. Youth, particularly students, have demonstrated a shocking lack of devotion to democracy's core symbols and values. They lack a solid understanding of democratic ideals that should help, guide, and lead their actions in carrying out their civic obligations, as well as the knowledge of democratic ideas required to equip them to engage in a democracy. On the other hand, Aimiyeagbon and Uzamere (2014) said that undergraduate students are aware of, comprehend, and internalise democratic ideas when participating in civic engagement. According to Iyoha et al. (2003), the majority of Nigeria's population are young people who make decisions for the country. According to Abba and Imam (2016), teenagers have been utilised as instruments of violence on several occasions. They actively engaged in disruptive and anti-social activity, such as demonstrations of intra as well as inter-political party fights along with additional politically inspired aggression, ritual, murders, abduction and hostage taking, arson, including cult associated harm. In addition, Owede et al. (2016) found that members of the Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF), Catholic Youth Organisation of Nigeria (CYON), and Baptist Youth Fellowship (BYF) had relatively

low levels of political involvement in the Yenagoa metropolitan. In terms of gender difference in participation, they also reported that 81% of both male and female faith-based youth organizations' members only register to enable them vote during election. In terms of engaging in the discussion of political related issues, 66% of the male members of faith-based youth organizations are more involved compared to the 6% of female members.

Adejumobi stated that for approximately a decade, since the procedure of political rejuvenation began in Nigeria, the cause of democracy looks to be in a quagmire or, more accurately, in crisis in most sections of the country. Furthermore, there appears to be a slow but hazardous re-institutionalization of autocratic along with authoritarian governments dressed in democratic trappings. In some situations, former despots and military tyrants have reappeared as "born again" democrats to re-establish or maintain their reign, while in others, a new breed of nascent autocrats is forming. Elections and the electoral system appear to be the primary victims of this democratic retreat. Election doctrines, institutions, and procedures are primarily defined by unscrupulous alteration, brinkmanship politics, as well as subversion. Thus, the purpose and substance of elections in a democracy with regard to articulating public will, causing political changes, and legitimising political regimes are severely limited. In other words, the current trend is to criticise elections and consider them as a devalued part and disappearing shadow of Nigeria's system of democracy. According to Rokeach (2011), political education serves as a foundation for political responsibility and a way of guaranteeing reciprocity and transformation between rulers and the governed.

The more concerted authority rulers have via election, the more efficiently they can utilise their scarce assets to force acquiescence. According to Falade and Orungbemi (2010), political education is the right training of young people for the duties and responsibilities these individuals must assume once they reach adulthood. They regard political education as the cultivation of the values, knowledge, and abilities required for political involvement, with moral precedence over other goals of educational institutions in a society with democracy. They said that political education in a society with democracy equips persons to actively engage in their communities. Intentional reproduction of society is the aim of democratic instruction and politics. It is worth noting that learning about politics is one of the absolute most effective ways of educating people for genuine democracy. Falade (2007), on his part, said that effective education is defined not only by how children do in school assessments, but also by how they think, what they value, how analytical and critical they can be, as well as how they question and reflect. He additionally pointed out that the impact of political coursework on democratic attitudes among Nigerians is low due to schooling, which focuses more on education for jobs. As a result, he came to the conclusion that education for democratic heritage must shift from a functionalist in outlook and vocation-oriented a different light on schooling (education for jobs) to one in which the conventional framework of schooling grows into a revolutionary pedagogy.

According to Agu et al. (2013), four significant causes contribute to poor voter participation in Nigeria: (a) INEC's incompetence (b) the political environment (c) unemployment and (d) electoral violence. In another milestone, Akpeke and

Ejere (2001) held the view that a lot of educated individuals shy away from active politics due to flaws in political institutions, structures, personnel, as well as procedures that allow for rigging, blackmail, hooliganism, as well as thuggery, and thus proposed ways to make engaged engagement in politics appealing to all, especially those with higher educations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study demonstrates that democracy can only be maintained and preserved when democratic principles are ingrained in citizens' minds and behaviours. Study also found that political education may have a considerable impact on students' attitudes regarding the rule of law, election processes, and political engagement (whether male or female and regardless of region). To engage effectively in democratic functions, Nigerians must have a strong understanding of democratic ideals that would help, guide, and steer their actions in carrying out their civic obligations. Citizens' decision to engage or not get involved with democracy is determined by their consciousness, adherence, and internalisation of political education principles and the broader political system. It was recommended that females should be encouraged to take up political positions and appointments, and that students irrespective of their location should participate actively in the electoral process as it will help them in the internalization of the democratic values.

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