



Gender, Youth and Political Engagement in Selected Universities in Gombe State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The study examines gender differences in political engagement among young people in universities in Gombe State, North East Nigeria. Youth political engagement has remained a source for concern in Nigeria, with more youth advocating for laws to ensure increased youth participation in governance. These agitations birthed the 'Not too Young to run' bill signed into law in July 2017 by the Buhari administration. The study focuses on gender differences in political engagement among young people in selected universities in Gombe State with focus on the 2015 and 2019 general elections with the aim to determine if gender differences exist among young people; what forms of political engagement do young people patronize and what informs their choices; determine if gender differences among young people in politics correlates with their disproportionate involvement in governance in Gombe State. Relying on data from a survey in 2021, of young people aged 18-29 years old; the study situates its arguments within the rational choice theory. Using chi-square test to determine the correlation between the variables. The findings reveal that gender difference in political engagement exist among young people in universities in Gombe State and that majority of young people participated in the 2015 and 2019 general elections in Gombe State and were prominent in voting and political campaigns/rallies. The study concludes that increased engagement of young people in political activities such as vying for political posts is imperative in order to change the power dynamics and ensure good governance in the state. It therefore, recommends massive mobilization of young people towards membership drive aimed at using their voting power to ensure the utilization of their human capital resources to secure their places in governance and administration of the state

Keywords: Gender, Youth, Governance, Political Participation, Elections

Citation of article: Kinge, R. F. (2022). Gender, Youth and Political Engagement in Selected Universities in Gombe State, Nigeria. *African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies (AJPAS)*, 15(1):84-102

Date Submitted: 12/04/2022 **Date Accepted:** 14/05/2022 **Date Published:** June, 2022

Introduction

In recent times, gender differences among young people in politics and civic engagement have sparked off heated debate and discussions across the globe with the aim of bridging the gap. According to UN (2020), young people between the ages of 15 and 24 years are 1.2 billion constituting 16% of the world's population. Inter parliamentary Union's (IPU) research on youth participation in parliaments in 2021, found out that only 2.6 % of the world's members of parliament are under aged 30 years. Further, 25 % of the world's single and lower houses of parliament have no Members of Parliament (MPs) aged under 30 while 73% of the world's upper houses of parliament have no members of parliament aged under 30 (IPU, 2021). This translates to the majority of young people often being marginalized or excluded from mainstream politics and decision-making processes as well as relatively low participation in formal, institutional political processes compared to older citizens across the globe. No doubt this demonstrates unequal representativeness of the political system and consequent disenfranchisement of young people.

A glance at the African continent reveals that Africa's population under 35 years represents almost 22.7% of the world's total youth population, with 70% of sub-Saharan Africa under the age of 30 years, and youths aged between 15 and 35 years constitute 21% of more than 1 billion people in Africa, whereas another 42 % are less than 15 years old (Gyimah- Brempong and Kimenyi, (2013). By this information, young people are not represented adequately in formal political institutions and processes such as parliaments, political parties, elections, and public administrations. The situation is even more difficult for both young women as well as women at mid-level and decision-making/leadership positions (UNDP, 2021).

In Nigeria, the status of young people and political engagement have continued to stir reactions and heated debate. The current disposition of young people in a seemingly choking political structure and institution has left majority of them frustrated and weary about their efforts to gain access to governance, public administration and nation building. No doubt decision makers see young people as lacking the skills and experience to engage in full blown political activities and ascend to leadership positions and impact their communities positively. This high level of marginalization and exclusion, which is exacerbated by limited educational and socio-economic

opportunities, have left majority of young people idle, frustrated, vulnerable and restive and are used as political thugs during elections in developing countries.

The general objective of this paper is to examine the political engagement among young people in universities in Gombe State in the 2015 and 2019 general elections within the context of gender relations. Specifically, this paper seeks to investigate the following; if gender differences in political engagement exist among young people in universities in Gombe State; determine the forms of political activities young people in universities in Gombe State patronize; the factors responsible for any gender differences in political engagement among young people in universities in Gombe State; explore the correlation of political engagement among young people and their disproportionate representation in organs of governance in the Gombe State. These investigations were done using gender as independent variable and membership of political parties, voting, attending campaigns/rallies, providing financial support, political candidate, writing letters to politicians as dependent variables

The paper is divided into five sections namely: Introduction, abridged review of existing studies, methodology, presentation and analysis of data, and discussion of findings and conclusion. The discussions on gender differences among young people in selected universities in Gombe State were anchored on the rational choice theory of political Science.

Conceptual and theoretical Explorations

Gender

Discussions on 'gender' as a concept has ignited heated debates on several issues relating to the behaviors of male and female in any given society in recent times with lots of changes on gender roles. While scholars have situated gender to reflect the responsibilities, expectations, privileges and opportunities associated with being male or female, feminist theories and political imperatives are centered on the significance of gender as a social force, which shape all areas of life including, sociocultural, economic and political spheres. According to Sarker (2006) and Waylen, (1996) gender relations depict issues of inequality and subordination and deep-rooted discrimination against women. Scholars like Connell, (1985) and Millett, (1970) have argued that gender is more of a cultural category, embedded in beliefs and rules about identity and

sexuality. These beliefs and norms manifest in certain ideas and practices in world societies, which guide human actions, and how individual actors may project their identities, take hold of opportunities and experience well-being in life (Arsel, Eranta, & Moisaner(2015). However, the World Health Organization defines gender as the result of socially constructed ideas about the behavior, actions, and roles a particular sex performs. Directly derived from the varied definitions of the concept 'gender' this study situates gender within the characteristics, roles, and responsibilities assigned to men and women in any given society, and argues, that gender relations inhibits equality between men and women and ensures deep-rooted discrimination against women and this varies from society to society.

Youth

Variations on the age limit for who is a youth have enabled most societies around the globe unapologetically perpetuates various forms of discrimination against young people. The United Nations classifies youths as individuals between the age bracket of 15 to 24 years, the African Charter on Youth classifies individuals aged 15 to 35 years as youth, same is known to be the position of the National Youth policy in Nigeria (UN,1981; African Charter, 2006; National Youth Policy, 2019) Among the various definitions of youth (Odoh, Chukwuma, Egwuma, & Eme, 2014) opine that youth is traditionally seen as a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. In the same vein, Furlong (2013) argues that youth is an experience that may shape an individual's level of dependency, which can be influenced in many ways based on different cultural perspectives, personal experiences and level of dependency basically on family emotionally and economically”.

From the above perspective, the expectations and responsibilities of a youth across societies are overbearing on young people as they are expected to meet up with certain societal standards like securing a source of livelihood, among others before they can be considered matured and good enough to make informed decisions that can impact positively. Sometimes, a young man must have a family, financial capability and possession of some form of positive influence in his immediate community to be considered matured and be trusted. At this time, age seems not to play much role much in measuring sense of responsibility and maturity and how they relate with others. Sadly the reality on ground is that these perceptions and practices determine the selection

and enthronement of leadership structures across societies in the world including Africa and Nigeria. On this note, Tyyskä, (2017), argues that using age to define who is a youth does not exactly reflect the true picture of the reality on ground. For example, Nigeria's Kogi State governor Yahaya Bello who is 47 years old, is the youngest governor and is still being referred to as a youth. To this end, therefore, scholars have argued that age-based definitions of young people have not been consistent across cultures or times and conclude that it is more accurate to focus on social processes in the transition to adult independence for young people. Given the scope of this study which covers specifically Gombe State in Nigeria adopts 18-35 years old as stated in the National Youth Policy of who is a youth and this aligns with the above context which agrees that though age is closely related to peoples' capacity to influence their societies, the reality is that other factors should be taken into consideration before a young person can enjoy his rights to be included in decision making processes and administration in various communities across the globe. Therefore, in addition to age, definitions and measurements of the determination should include society-context based, with regards to the transition process from childhood to maturity, adulthood and independence of young people.

Political Participation

Known to be some formal and informal activities geared towards the influence and control of state power, political participation has been interpreted differently by several scholars in the field to reflect the common characteristics situated within the limitations of activities that are geared towards influencing the "state. Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) concur that political participation is the activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action – either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies. In its formal form however, political participation includes political processes like voting in national and local elections, working in campaigns, attending rallies, contacting public officials, attending political meetings, membership in political parties or clubs, engaging in illegal or legal protests of which all are geared towards influencing government policies and actions. To this study, political participation includes all those activities carried out by individuals with the intent to influence state power

which include membership of political parties, voting in elections, and participation in political campaigns/rallies among others.

Gender, Youth and Political Engagement

The decreasing level of youth participation in politics and governance has been a major concern at the global level. Existing literature on youths' political engagement have dwelled on young people as a general group, with far fewer works on gender differences in the drive toward acquiring state power and keeping it. According to studies conducted on nations with different political regimes and social traditions as well as varying levels of economic development by Burns, (2017) Dalton, (2018), Gallego, (2017), Paxton, Kunovich, & Hughes, (2017) Schlozman, Burns, & Verba, (2019), men are more interested in political issues and more physically active than women. With regard to youth and political engagement, national statistics collected in Italy by Pintat, (2018), indicates that, while at 14 years male and female adolescents show similar levels of political interest, the gender gap becomes significant from late adolescence (18–19 years). Such gap is higher in participation in formal politics and the gender gap in political engagement and participation persists.

In Nigeria, the number of young people participating in politics is not proportionate to the approximately 50% of the nation's population and has not translated into equal representation in politics, governance and leadership. These among others have aided the rising global focus on issues of youth in government, aided by calls such as that of goal three of the Millennium Development Goals. Young people have campaigned effortlessly across the globe to promote the political and electoral rights of young people aspiring for different leadership positions and political offices by seeking to reduce the qualification age for political office. Thus, in 2007, a movement called "How Old is Old Enough" which began in 2003 fought successfully to lower the age requirement for youth candidacy in election in Wales, Scotland, and England from age 21 to 18 years which is consistent with the voting age in the UK (Hamitton, 2011; Kenealy, Eichorn, Parry, Parterson, & Raymond 2017; Eichorn, 2018). A similar movement emerged in Turkey where youths pressured their government to amend the constitution to decrease the eligibility age for parliament candidacy from 30 years to 25 years in the year 2006. Also, in 2017 the age was further reduced to 18 years to be eligible to be voted for as a member of parliament

(TRT World, 2017). In the Nigeria civil society groups like Yiaga Africa and others have consistently advocated for greater involvement of young people in politics.

However, in recent years, the international community has prioritized youth's participation in politics by developing strategies and canvassing for a larger share of young people to be elected into national parliaments (Krook and Nugent, 2018). This has led to reforms in several countries (for example, Uganda, Kenya, Morocco, Rwanda, Tunisia, Kyrgyzstan, Peru, Sri Lanka) introducing a different form of quota system to increase youth's participation in political process (Kuwonu, 2017; UNDP, 2017). For instance, Article 100 of the 2010 Kenya constitution reserved twelve parliamentary seats for youths to be nominated by political parties, 30 reserved seats by the Morocco electoral law, 5 reserved seats in Uganda parliaments, the National Youths' Council of Rwanda is entitled to have two elected representatives in the Chamber of Deputies (Kuwonu, 2017). In the case of Nigeria, the President's signing of the 'NOT TOO YOUNG TO RULE' bill into Law in 2019. This law birthed the reduction of age cap for President from 40 years to 35 years, Senator from 35 years to 30 years, and House of Assembly and State Houses of Assembly 30 years to 25 years, for various political offices in order to ensure increased youth involvement in the nation's political processes and administration.

Available literature show that in Gombe State the structure of the political system is dominated by political alliances of 'old man' and sustained by money politics. Given the nature of the political scenario in Nigeria, which ensures that political candidates invest heavily or are being invested upon, the youths do not have the opportunity to play this money game in Gombe State; the socio-economic status of young people leaves nothing to write home about and they have over time faced socio economic exclusion which leaves them with little or no resources to engage in politics. This condition has further orchestrated their unlikely positions to win elections, as they are not considered a secure investment.

With regard to gender differences among young people in political engagement, Mayer & Schmidt (2014) in 'A comparison between youths from three different countries namely Mexico, China, and US in political engagement indicated that young women were somewhat less interested in politics in two of the three countries despite the near universal assumption that politics is "a young man' thing," stating females value political participation at least as more

males do, in all the three nations. Hooghe and Stolle (2014), also concur that 14-year-olds in the United States do not differ in political participation, but girls prefer more social-movement related forms, and boys prefer radical and confrontational activities. Harris (2018) has argued that new technology has continued to structure political participation among young people by gender. In this regard, he opines that internet political participation reveals that young women and young men use new technology differently. However, researches have further revealed a gender gap in political activism, with young men more likely to take part in actions and demonstrations, whereas young women are more likely to donate money to a cause or write about politicians in newspapers.

Theoretical Framework

Given the diverse views on social phenomenon by scholars in the social and management sciences, this study could be predicated on several theoretical standpoints. However, discussions on gender, youth and political engagement in Gombe State are situated within the rational choice theory. Although conventional rational choice theory falls within the specifics of economics, it is increasingly being used across other fields in the social sciences namely sociology, philosophy, political science as it facilitates the understanding of individual behaviour. Also, known as choice theory or rational action theory, it was developed in the 18th century, and the proponents of this theory like Adam Smith projected its key elements for all rational choice explanations to include individual preferences, beliefs and constraints. Inherent in the discussion of rational theory is the position that “when faced with several courses of action, people usually do what they believe is likely to have the best overall outcome”. According to Friedman (1953) an individual acts to balance costs against benefits in order to arrive at action that maximizes personal advantage thereby sustaining rationality, individual self-interest and beneficial outcomes.

In politics, the activities of individuals in relation to the acquisition of power and its benefits are likened to market competition for goods and services as seen in economics. Speaking directly to the phenomenon under consideration, Buchanan and Tullock (1974), in their book, *The Calculus of Consent: Logical Foundations of Constitutional Democracy*, argue that “the representative or

the average individual acts on the basis of the same overall value scale when he participates in market activity and in political activity”. In the same vein, Tullock (1976) asserts that “voters and customers are essentially the same people. Mr. Smith buys and votes; he is the same man in the supermarket and in the voting booth.” Central to the rational choice theory are the following assumptions: The individual decision maker -individualism which holds that individuals have preferences and choose according to those preferences by determining what options are available and then choosing the most preferred one according to some consistent criterion. To Abell (2000), the rational choice theorists have argued that it is individuals who ultimately take actions. Individuals, as actors in the society and everywhere, behave and act always as rational beings, self-calculating, self-interested and self-maximizing, these individual social actions are the ultimate source of larger social outcomes. Breaking this further, these theorists uphold the following: optimality which holds that individual choose their actions optimally, given their individual preferences and available opportunities or constraints; Structures - Abell argues that structures and norms dictate a single course of action; aggregate optimal decisions of actors and ensure collective benefits; self-regarding Interest – this assumption states that the actions of an individual are concerned entirely with his or her own welfare. However, optimality is at the center of the rational choice theory; rationality upholds that all individuals act in ways that would benefit them more; every individual is most likely to undertake courses of actions that they perceive to be the best possible option and one that would immensely be to their own advantage. To Abell (2000), “only individuals take actions and social actions; and these actions and social actions are optimally chosen and are entirely concerned with their own welfare”. Speaking directly to the subject matter, the theory offers explanations on gender, youth and politics in that young men and women aged 18 years and above, regardless of their genders engage in activities that determine their livelihood be it political, social or economic and they do so considering the options and advantages available in all situations that their face. Therefore, their conscious and optimal decision to engage in political process in the state can only be undermined if they want that to happen. This speaks to the conscious decisions of young people to be fully involved in the process of governance and administration in the state by engaging in conventional and unconventional political activities.

Methodology

The study made use of data collected in a survey conducted on the subject matter in 2021. The scope of the study is specifically the 2015 and 2019 general elections in Gombe State (GS). It covered young people aged 18 – 25 years, in universities from Federal University Kashere (FUK) and Gombe State University (G.S.U). The target population for this study was female and male students from selected faculties and departments from both universities. From both universities, some Faculties and Departments were selected based on the students' population therefore, the higher the student population the more chances such a Department was selected to represent the schools' population. The Faculties of Arts, Social and Management Sciences, Education and Science were selected. From FUK, the following departments were selected, Political Science, Sociology, Geography, Economics, Education; from G.S.U. Political Science, Sociology, English, History, Biology, Computer and Biology education. Sample size determination formula by Yamane Taro (1964) was used to determine the exact sample size for the study. A total of 379 questionnaires were administered and 268 retrieved constituting 72%. Data was analyzed using Descriptive statistics of frequency count, percentage, and chi square test was used to determine the relationship between variables. A post survey was conducted to ensure the students who filled out the questionnaires were eligible to do so given the guidelines based on age, educational background and university admission.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The study relied on a survey conducted in 2021 on selected students from two universities in Gombe State namely Federal University Kashere and Gombe State University. The target population was final year students, aged 18-29 years old based on the National Youth Policy definition age of youth. About 67.2% representing 180 respondents are male and 32.8% representing 88 respondents are female. 50.7% representing 136 respondents are aged 18-23 years old and 49.3% representing 132 responding are aged 24 -29 years old. All respondents have basically Senior Secondary Certificate as their highest educational qualification since they were yet to acquire their first degrees. 72% representing 192 respondents are single, 27% representing 73 respondents are married, while no respondent is widowed, 1% representing 3

respondents are divorced. The questionnaires were administered to students on Campus, 379 and 268 were retrieved.

Table 1: Data collected on responses to research questions

S/N	Question	Yes	No
1	Do you have a voter's card?	146 (55.5%)	122 (45.5%)
2	Did you engage in any political activities during the 2015 and 2019 general elections in Gombe state?	172 (64%)	96 (36%)
3	Do you think gender difference exist in political engagement among young people in Gombe state?	155 (58%)	113 (42%)
4	Do you think gender difference in political engagement among young people influence the low representation of youth in governance and leadership and decision-making processes in the state?	147 (55%)	121 (45%)

Source: Field survey, 2021

From table 1, the survey seeks to know if respondents have voters' card which is a basic requirement for them to engagement in electing their choice candidate during elections. The responses reveal that 146 (55.5 %) respondents stated in the affirmative while 122 (45.5%) stated otherwise. Drawing from this response rate is the conviction that young people understand the electoral processes and requirement to get involved. Acquiring a voter's card is not an easy process and resources including finances are invested in the process. Therefore, any young person who judged it relevant to get one is serious about making political contributions to the state and nation at large.

Further, seeking to know if respondents engaged in any form of political activities during the 2015 and 2019 general elections in the state, the responses reveal high level of political engagement among young people in the state. This response rate is quite encouraging with 172 respondents representing 64% affirming that they did while 96 respondents representing 36% stated otherwise. The results reveal young peoples' determination to contribute to the political process of the state as well as make their voices heard for positive change and development.

Table 2: Forms of political activities young people engaged in 2015 / 2019 general elections

Option	Frequency	Percent %
Registered member of a political party	11	4.1
Voting	106	39.6
Attending campaign rallies	20	7.5
Political candidate/contestant	2	0.7
Providing financial support to political candidate	2	0.7
Others	5	1.9
Non-participation	122	45.5
Total	268	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

From table 2 above, 11(4.1%) young people are members of political parties, 106 (39.6%) voted during the 2015 and 2019 general elections, while 20 stated to have attended campaigns and rallies. 2(.7%) young people agreed to have contested for political positions while 2(.7%) engaged in providing financial support to politicians and 5 (1.9%) stated that they did other activities like writing protest letters. From the above table, majority of the young voted during the last elections, while a good number of them did not engage in any political activity during the general elections under review.

Table 3: Forms of political activities young people engaged in during the 2015 and 2019 general elections along gender lines

	Membership in Political Parties	Attending Campaigns /Rallies	Voting	Political candidate /contestant	Providing Financial support	others	
Male	9	13	51	2	1	4	143
Female	2	7	55	0	1	1	125
Total	11	20	106	2	2	5	268
Chi-square significan							1.64

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Avg. No
of
activities

6

Source: Field survey, 2021; Ch-square sig: Pearson $\chi^2=9.17$, df 6, p= .164

However, looking across the various political activities identified in the studies of which young people in Gombe State engaged in during 2015 and 2019 general elections in the State, gender differences in almost all activities is visible though marginal. The implication of this result is that knowledge about politics or political knowledge is not limited to a particular gender, though young boys tend to gain membership into political parties and attending political campaigns/rallies, and contest for political positions more than young girls. However, young girls turn out to vote more than young boys. Could this result be seen to reflect same trend in adults? However, it is indicative that both genders engage in political activities in the state.

To check whether these differences in the number of young people along genders lines on engagement in political activities is statistically significant, the chi-square test was employed, gender was chosen as independent variable and the various political activities as dependent variables. The analysis shows a statistically non-significant relationship between gender and the political activities young people engage in during the 2015 and 2019 general elections as seen above where the computed chi-square $(\chi^2) = (6, 268) = 9.17$, $p=.16$ The significant value is above minimum significant value of .05, thereby revealing there is no significant difference. This indicates that young people's political engagement is not influenced by gender in the state. This result is not far-fetched from the role youth activism, which is high on university campuses, plays on young people's perception of politics and citizenship.

However, it is interesting to note that more young girls turned out to vote during the general elections than young boys and more young boys were absent from all political activities than young girls. Looking at crucial activities like contesting for political positions no young girl indicated having engaged in that, and far fewer are registered members of political parties.

This trend reveals that young girls are not present/engage in vital activities that would determine their proportionate representation at formal institutions of governance in the state.

Further, more young people generally are seen to have voted and attended political campaigns and rallies during 2015 and 2019 general elections, with commendable efforts as registered members of political parties. The survey examined other issues like challenges young people face in venturing into politics and governance in the state as well as efforts at boosting young people's political engagement in the state and bridging the gap seen in the political activities of young people along gender lines.

Among the challenges mentioned were lack of value, lack of respect for a particular gender, selfishness, religion, inequality in socio-cultural arrangement, traditional and customary arrangements, the large crowd, political violence, lack of voter's card, and Marriage. In the same vein, as seen in table 2, majority of the respondents agreed that young people's low political engagement in the state accounts for their non-involvement in the governance of state. They are not voted into state house of assembly as well as gain political appointments. This they stated further is due to illiteracy, lack of experience, low political culture, marginalization in all areas of life including the economy and violence.

To the young people, the perception that politics is the activities of older people is upheld across board and this perpetuate their lack of interest in political activities at varying degrees, and nonchalant attitude towards issues of governance. The far-reaching implication of these actions by young people is that they are not fully integrated in the decision-making process in the State and are discriminated against due to lack of awareness, lack of exposure, and inexperience. They are visibly present in activities that usher in their choice candidates like voting and campaigns and rallies; yet they cannot determine what happens after the elections because they are not usually a part of the decision-making processes.

Discussion of Findings

The study made use of one independent variable for analysis of correlates of political engagement among young people in Gombe State. In this regard, additive number of political activities that young people engaged in during the general elections in 2015 and 2019 is recorded as dependent variables. Seeking to determine whether gender differences in political engagement exist among young people in universities in Gombe State; determine the forms of political activities young people in Gombe State patronize; and some factors responsible for any gender

differences in political engagement among young people in Gombe State; explore the correlation of political engagement among young people and their disproportionate representation in organs of governance in the Gombe State, the survey asked respondents whether young people registered as members of political parties, voted during the elections, attended campaigns and rallies of political parties, gave financial support to political aspirants or politicians, and other related political activities which they were asked to mention specifically on the questionnaire. Table 2 is a tabulation of the political activities young people engaged in 2015 and 2019 general elections. Table 3 shows the political activities young people engaged in along gender lines which show the gender differences for various political activities. Nonparticipation of young people in political activities in the state is quite huge as seen in table 3 where 122 of out 268 respondents stated that they did not participate in any activity. For both genders, participation was higher in just one activity which is voting in elections.

Looking at the numbers of young people who did not participate in any political activities, the result as well as previous studies, strongly reveal that young people are grossly absent in mainstream politics in Gombe State. However, the commendable efforts of young people especially young girls who participated during the elections in voting and attending campaigns/rallies is consistent with Ajijola (2020) who notes that, in general, Nigerians are “beginning to understand that they do not have to be afraid of voting or participating in elections. You can be a part without any violence.” More so, the literature indicate that young people can positively impact the nation’s growing democracy when they begin to see themselves as stakeholders in nation-building, and engage meaningfully in all processes leading to national development.

Conclusion

Consistent with literature on political engagement of young people across countries of the world, the study found out that young people in Gombe State aged 18-29 years participated in all political activities identified in the study during the 2015 and 2019 general elections in the state, showing a total of 146 respondents who answered the question in the affirmative. Recent studies on the subject matter suggests increased youth political participation in Nigeria and attributes

this trend to greater awareness, better understanding of how to participate in electoral processes, and increased confidence among young people in their ability to raise issues, particularly through social media. This is corroborated by Bichi (2019) who described how the youth took an active leadership role in campaigning for the 2019 elections, which he stated encouraged greater participation among their peers. He explained that “Young Nigerians controlled the campaigns; engaged citizens in both policy discussions, propaganda, and so on showcasing their activities in campaign groups and platforms, that were dominated and driven by young people.” and platforms like Aso Villa Demo Day to pitch ideas to the president (Ogo, 2016).

It is further revealed in the study that young people have political knowledge which is a requirement to ensure their domineering status on the political stage in the state be it vying for political offices, mobilization for membership drive to support, promote and elect their choice candidates or influence political decisions in the state. This is seen in the number who engaged in one political activity or the other in 2015 and 2019. Again, political knowledge among young people is not influenced by gender, an indication that young boys and girls can positively impact their communities and state if they are political committed to the ideals of the state. The study also found out that there is a tendency for young boys to be specifically engaged in contesting for political offices. This is reflected in the political electoral arrangement for adults. There is a tendency for young girls to be more committed to voting exercises during elections.

Perhaps an important finding to report here is determining if gender differences exist in political engagement among young people and if it affects young men and young women differently. Here the study finds out that some variables, such as membership of political parties, attending campaign/rallies, contact political aspirants are more associated with young boys than girls and voting in elections is more associated with young girls. This trend is common in adults, where women constitute the largest population in most countries, exercise their franchise but most times do so in favour of their male counterparts. Meanwhile providing financial support to political candidates or writing letters to aspirants or politicians or writing protest letters affect young men and women about the same. But for all variables, there are clear gender differences numerically but no statistically significant effect. Most notable among these is the variable that measured for voting in elections and contesting political positions. There is evidence that young

people have political knowledge and are interested in politics and this affects girls and boys about the same. But the nonchalant attitude exhibited by young people towards political activities in the state is instituted by their lack of exposure and poor political culture hence, their inability to increase electoral engagement for young people and other political commitments. The study therefore, recommends massive mobilization of young people towards membership drive aimed at using their human capital resources to secure their places in governance and administration in the state via registering as members of political parties, contesting for political positions voting during elections among others.

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