

**YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND STUDENTS UNION  
ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF UNIVERSITY OF BENIN.**

**BY**

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**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

**BENIN CITY.**

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL  
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## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project titled Youth Political Participation and Students Union Elections in Nigeria: a case study of University of Benin, was carried out by ISAH IBRAHIM OSIPAMOBO with the matriculation number SSC1809618 from the Department of Political Science.

It is found worthy of acceptance in partial fulfillment of the award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) degree in Political Science

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DATE:

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DATE:

## **DEDICATION**

This Project is dedicated to God Almighty for seeing me through my Journey in the Pursuit of my BSc degree and My Beloved Parent for their Support and Prayers.

It is also dedicated to my Late Friend cum sister Mrs. Garuba Faith Ebhos, may her soul continue to rest in peace. Amen.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My Endless appreciation to Almighty Allah who have watched over me and control my path, I am Grateful for all He have done in My Life. Oh! My dear Parent Mr and Mrs Isah Musah I appreciate all you support, motivation and prayers. I will always choose both of you as my parent even in my next life. Thank you for gifting me with my Beloved brothers and sisters (Isah Aishat, Isah Aminat, Isah Nurudeen, Isah Adizat) I Love you all.

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The study investigated the “Youth Political Participation and Student Union Election in Nigeria: A case study of University of Benin” it ascertains if Nigeria youth are actively participating in politics or not using the student union election as the point of analysis. The Study adopted a quantitative research method with survey instruments developed to gather data analysis. Findings after the Survey revealed that Participating in politics by the youth is low and is caused by some challenges. It’s important to note that the findings supported that bad leadership and poor representation from past political leaders has led to the downward trend of participation by the youths. It was further advised that the government should stage an awareness campaign to enlighten the citizens and youth most especially on the need why they should participate in political activities and also encourage youth political advocacy group to encourage political participation amongst the youth.*

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.

The significance of youth active political participation in every Nations or Nation state cannot be overemphasized. It cannot be denied every country, organization or union needs the input of it young member (youth) for her development. The importance of youth participation in every Nation can be seen in a speech by Robert F. Kennedy in 1996,

*The solution is to depend on youth, which is not a certain age but rather an attitude, a disposition of the will, a characteristic of imagination, a preponderance of boldness over shyness, and a love of adventure over ease. A young Italian explorer found the New World, a young monk started the Protestant Reformation, a young commander expanded an empire from Macedonia to the edges of the planet, a young lady recaptured France's land, and 32-year-old Thomas Jefferson [said] that "all men are equal." We can all change the world as these heroes did.*  
*(Robert F. Kennedy, 1996.)*

However, for many years the numbers of youth that are actively involved in political process around the world have gradually reduced. This is more obviously in underdeveloped countries like Nigeria. It has been noted by various scholars that An important problem facing modern democracies is the dilemma of political participation, particularly among young people. (Norris 2018; Hay 2017; Farthing 2015; Furlong and Cartmel 2017; Henn and Foard 2017.). Political Participation by ordinary citizens of a country has been found to be vital for the proper functioning and sustenance of democratic governance in all countries around the

world today (Bynner & Ashford 2015; Esser & de Vreese 2017). The development of most developed and industrialized countries cannot be separated from the active contribution of the youth of such countries. Countries like United Kingdom, United State of America, Canada, Japan and the likes holds their development to the contribution of the youth both economically and politically, but the activities of youth in the world this era have greatly reduced, this hold to the fact that the older people are not even ready to leave the system in the hands of the youth and the youth are not even consciousness nor motivated to take their position in the society. Examining young people's political involvement in modern democracies around the world, one is faced with the challenge of political apartheid from youths, and their non-involvement in the decision making process as well as electing their leader to adequately represent their interest. There is no question that youth, the future generation of voters and rulers, are dissatisfied, and as a result, they are losing faith in politics (Fer, 2018).

Nigeria for instance is where it is today because of the input of her youth before, during and after the colonial rule. Without the indisputable proof of youths involvement in political activities and decision-making, Nigeria's political history would be lacking. The youth of Nigeria made significant pre-independence efforts that helped the nation of Nigeria and even the continent of Africa attain freedom. Young students like Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Chief Anthony Enahoro, and others fought for Nigerian independence. They began their campaign for independence as Student Group Activists, and they continued to lead strong organizations that opposed colonial control at the time. Yakubu Gowon was only twenty-nine (29) years old when he became the Head of State, while Anthony Enahoro was roughly twenty-one (21) when he proposed the motion for Nigeria's

independence in 1953. The late Issac Adaka Boro from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka was in his 30s when he founded the Niger Delta Volunteer Force and thereafter used the force to fight for liberation of his people (Afolayan, 2018).

Looking at these individuals' lives demonstrates that despite having difficulties, dark periods, and an apparently hopeless future as young men, they stepped up to the challenge and started making a difference even during their undergraduate years. A large population of the Nigeria Youth are Student, hence the study of youth political participation without including their activities within Student Unionism and the University community would be incomplete. This is true because if we look at those that fought for the independence of Nigeria they start the whole struggle as a student through student Unionism from outside Nigeria and within the continent of Africa. (Afolayan, 2018).

More than 70% of the 80 million youth in Nigeria, who make up 60% of the total Nigeria population, are reportedly jobless despite having the appropriate education, professional experience, and other qualifications for the position (Afolayan, 2018). It is easier to visualize the risk and implications of young unemployment and inactivity. The current patterns in young people's political engagement in Nigerian politics are based on the envisioned scenario. The future is still unpredictable since we are still in the beginning stages of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. For Nigerian young, food, housing, and clothes remain their most important requirements (Afolayan, 2018).

Most empirical reports shows that young people are leaving politics because they don't trust politicians and this shows how dissatisfied young people are to participate in politics. It is against this backdrop of the recession of

democracy and the concomitant youth disappointment with the politics in Nigeria and Nigeria Universities that we undertake the present study. The study's objective is to look at the socio-political elements that affect youths' interest towards politics and decision to engage actively in various political activities most especially elections in Nigeria Universities. This, we do, by investigating the student Union Government elections of the University of Benin, Benin City.

### **1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In Nigeria today, the problem of political participation is eminent. Politics engagement is regarded as crucial, but the shifting political, cultural, and economic realities have had a significant impact on young people's willingness to engage in politics. Many young people are abandoning civic and democratic responsibilities. It is within this premise the research will be examining the current political behavior of young adults in Nigeria Universities, and providing a lasting remedy to the challenge of political apathy from students in Nigeria Universities and Nigeria at Large, hence the topic *“Youth Political Participation and students’ Union Elections in Nigeria: A case study of University of Benin.”*

### **1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Objectives of this research are focus on finding factors and challenges that influences youth political participation in students’ union elections in Nigeria Universities using University of Benin as a case study. The objectives of this work will be analyzed as follows:

1. To examine the rationale for youth participation in students union election in Nigeria.
2. To examine the significance of youth participation in Students’ Union election in University of Benin.

3. To identify factors that encourage youth participation in student Union election in University of Benin.
4. To examine the factors that hinders youth from participating when it comes to politics in University of Benin.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What are the rationale for student participation in student union election in Nigeria?
2. What is the relevance of youth participation in students' union elections in university of Benin?
3. What are the factors that encourage youth participation in student Union election?
4. What are the factors that hinder youths from participating in political activities like Students' Union Elections?

### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study will give pertinent data on the nature and importance of young political participation, as well as an assessment of its difficulties. Understanding the relationships between youths and their participation in politics in Nigeria Universities using Student's Union Government election of the university of Benin as a case study is of great importance due to the fact that it has a big effect on youth involvement in politics from the local level and it will impact greatly on the political evolution of our dear nation.

In most nations of the world, for example in the EU it is perceived that youth are more distant and detached from Europe's old political system, particularly when it comes to voting (European Commission 2011). Additionally, young people are not just disengaged but also may be indifferent toward and/or

alienated from conventional political structures (stoker 2016; 2017). It is worthwhile to lay great emphasis on the significance of this study showing how it will contribute to knowledge and aid practice assist in policy making and implementation. Hence, it is an indisputable fact that the study will serve as a reference in the political process and political culture of youth in the university community. Additionally, it will be used as a tool to enhance youth involvement in political activities in Nigeria.

### **1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study focuses on youth political participation and students' union elections in Nigeria which is limited to University of Benin Student, in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria.

### **1.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

- 1. Youth:** Youth is a period of time in one's life that frequently refers to the years between childhood and maturity. It may also be characterized as having a youthful appearance, a fresh spirit, etc. The term "youth" is commonly used to refer to those between the ages of 14 and 21 for purposes like employment statistics, however the British Youth Council defines youth as everyone under the age of 31 (Altshuler D.; Strangler G.; Berkely K.; Burton L. 2019). According to the National Bureau of Statistics' 2012 National Baseline Youth Survey, there are 64 million young people in Nigeria between the ages of 15 and 35. According to academics, it is more appropriate to focus on social processes in the transition to adult independence for defining youth because age-based definitions have not been constant throughout cultures or periods (Tyyska Vappu, 2015).

- 2. Political Participation:** this means for an individual, group, or community to be involved in political activity with the aim of actualizing a given course. It is a voluntary activities undertaken by an individual or group of persons to directly or indirectly impact public policy (through influencing the selecting of those who create policy). It encompasses a wide range of actions by which individuals form and express their ideas about how they are governed, as well as their attempts to participate in and influence the choices that will have an impact on their life as members of a community or Group. These actions include participating in political campaigns, contacting public leaders, signing petitions, demonstrating, etc.
- 3. Students' Union Government (S.U.G):** this is a student political association formed with the aim of protecting the interest and promoting the welfare of students in Universities, Polytechnic or College of Education. The Student Union is the representative of the entire body of students in a tertiary Institution, every student of a University is automatically a member of the union. Take for example in the University of Benin, every registered student is a member of the Student Union and automatically pay their membership dues along with their school fee.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

Following this chapter, relevant and relating literatures to our subject matter of this study will be identified and reviewed. Also, an attempt will be made to review literatures on selected variables, conceptual framework, and review of the theoretical framework and empirical research literature.

#### **2.1 CONCEPT OF YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND STUDENT UNIONISM**

##### **YOUTH**

In various literary works, the concept of youth has been described in a variety of ways. For instance, the World Bank classified youth as anybody between the ages of 12 and 24, but the United Nations considered youth as anyone between the ages of 15 and 24. While Hilker and Fraser contend that youth is not a strict construct based on age but rather a stage of transition between childhood and maturity, Galstyan contends that youth is a time of "transition from dependency to independence." Meanwhile, these age ranges have been criticized as being too small because of the political, societal, and economic realities in Africa. As a result, the 2009 National Youth Policy of Nigeria defined youth as being between the ages of 18 and 35. (Galstyan, 2019:3, Hilker & Fraser, 2009; National Youth Policy, 2019; United Nations, 2013). Therefore, as the study is focused on Nigeria, the words "youth" and "young people" are interchangeable and apply to those between the ages of 18 and 35. While the youth are described as a group of youthful, vivacious, and energetic people with a lot of vigor and desire for getting things done by The Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary (Oxford, 2015). If this statement is considered as granted, it then suffices to suggest that, more than any

other sector of the population, adolescents possess the necessary skills to accelerate the development of any civilization due to their inherent physical and mental capabilities (Carlisle, 2015). This explains why youth make up a big portion of every section of society.

In actuality, their part in the foundation, maintenance, and growth of any civilization is anchored both historically and culturally. Almost no civilization has ever existed without the essential contribution of young people. Not even Nigeria was an exception. Its young, the early nationalists, made tremendous efforts aimed towards these objectives, which led to its emergence and delink-age from the apron string of colonialism (Olusanya, 1980).

Their contributions and effects on the nation's polity's design and structure at the grassroots level go through several pivotal eras of Nigerian political history. Pre-colonial, colonial, and modern political orders are all included in this. Thus, it is important to thoroughly examine each of these eras in order to understand how youth and students fit into the country's political structure at the time.

## **YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

The concept youth political participation can properly be understood if we can comprehend the meaning of political participation. However before we can understand the concept we need to understand political culture as a concept, which is the element that determines the behavior and pattern of political participation in a society. Political culture is a set of attitudes, convictions, and feelings that provide political processes structure and purpose as well as the guiding presumptions and guidelines that direct action inside the political system (International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 1968). While Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba contend that it is a collection or body of cross-generational

norms, principles, tenets, ethos, and values that either directly or indirectly influence how individuals behave and act in relation to politics (Almond & Verba, 1963). According to this definition, political culture refers to the shared attitude, beliefs, and perspectives that members of the political system have. It goes without saying that political culture is what motivates people's political actions at any given period inside the political system. So, logically, a political culture is always in charge of the growth or lack thereof of any political system worldwide. This demonstrates the validity of the fundamental tenet that, once young people are socialized into the ideal or active participant political culture advocated by Almonds, they will exhibit political behaviors that will encourage young people to actively participate in politics and positively alter the political system.

Political participation, according to Verba and Nie (1972), is defined as "those private citizen activities that are more or less directly targeted at influencing the choice of governmental officials and/or the acts they conduct." This is to say that any activities by a citizen that is directed at influencing what happens in the political system is or taken seen as political participation. Another scholar, Van Deth (2014) uses the following characteristics to explain the idea of political participation:

- a) it is an activity;
- b) it is voluntary and not mandated by law or directed by a ruling class;
- c) it relates to people in their capacity as amateurs or non-professionals; and
- d) it pertains to government, politics, or the state.

Furthermore, after understanding what political culture and political participation is all about, we can now look at what we mean by youth political Participation. Sida (2010) defined youth political participation as young people's involvement in politics, civic engagement, active citizenship, and policymaking.

This might take a variety of shapes, such as serving in a government organisation or parastatal, casting ballot in an election, taking part in the government's budget process, running or accompanying for governmental office.

Ibezim (2019) points out that there are several obstacles to young political engagement in Nigeria, the most significant of which is a lack of awareness of the advantages it offers. The author goes on to say that additional issues affecting young people include unemployment, social marginalization, and a lack of resources and tools. The popular protests of 2011/2012 in the Arab States have demonstrated, according to Luhrmann (2013), that young engagement in formal politics is crucial in developing nations (i.e. Nigeria). Creative leadership and novel ideas can aid in eliminating autocratic behaviors. Individual capability development requires special attention. When doing so, extreme care should be paid to the capacity of organizations and the degree to which a setting encourages individuals and groups to engage in political processes. Mengistu (2017), who contends that the majority of young people in Africa, and consequently Nigeria, are susceptible to recruitment for armed conflict against a government, supports this claim. One example is the involvement of youth in the founding of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone.

Voting in elections is only one aspect of young people's political engagement. Young people's political engagement could take the following forms, according to Farthing (2012):

- a) participation as a right-based practice;
- b) participation as a mechanism for empowering young people;
- c) participation as a guarantee of efficiency in policy, practice, and services;
- and
- d) participation as a tool for young people's development.

Along with voting, there are other ways to get involved in politics which include campaigning, holding a political party membership, performing voluntary work, and taking part in civic responsibility, demonstrations, and community participation (Galsyan, 2019), new forms of participation have been documented in the literature (Pleyers & Karbach, 2014). They include:

- a) hacking and distributed denial of service (DDOS) attacks: This is a form of protest aimed at shutting down online servers and restricting access to internet services;
- b) clicktivism and slacktivism: This is an invitation to click specific links to express agreement with a particular statement. Although, it could sometimes be voluntary;
- c) online campaigning: Social network is increasingly becoming popular for its use in starting a cause and gain followership;
- d) crowdsourcing and crowdfunding: This rests on the use of the ‘crowd’ as feedback mechanism for ideas, feedback, project design, and financial support.
- e) liquid democracy/Liquid Feedback: As a new system, it allows users to make a collective decision by granting each individual the chance of voting and ‘democratically’ choosing their representative; and
- f) BarCamp: This is an online conference system where the participants themselves design the programme and its sessions (Pleyers and Karbach 2014).

The aforementioned shows that the idea of young political engagement is changing over time and is thus deserving of ongoing study and policy development.

## **2.2 REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL LITERATURE**

### ***2.2.1 Youth political participation in Pre-Colonial Nigeria: An Historical Evaluation.***

However, most research studies of this kind have historically preferred to ignore this era under the justification that there really was no legally recognized state or form of government at the time, therefore young people could not have been involved in politics. Although there may have been no legally recognized government in existence at this time, indigenous authority and governmental structures were put in place to administer the people's affairs long before colonialism began (Ajose, 2003).

According to Crowder, these were traditional institutions chosen by the people to run the society in accordance with its traditions, sometimes in harmony and other times in discord (Crowder, 1978; Falola et al. 1991). Both these ancient political organizations and the pre-colonial Nigerian political system as a whole were strongly impacted by the young. Even now, there are still more than 200 different ethnic nations, but the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba structures built are noteworthy. It should be emphasized that the fact that all of these nations cannot be adequately covered in this article influenced the decision to use these three conventional systems. Thus, the requirement for all of this scope (Akinrinde Omitola, 2020).

In the Hausa ancient political systems, young people who held the position of Mia-gida spoke on behalf of their families in public and political engagements at the ward, district, and emirate levels. In the ancient political structure, the Mai-gida was often the oldest adult male at the lowest level (Crowder, 1978). As previously stated, the importance of youth in pre-colonial Nigerian politics was

not exclusive to the Hausa traditional system; it was also ingrained with in Igbo traditional system (Akinrinde & Omitola, 2020). The young actively participated in the Igbo traditional system through the Age Grade Associations and the General Assembly platforms (Akinrinde & Omitola. 2020). In his response, Leo Dare (1983) succinctly said, "In the Igbo traditional system. Direct democracy was used to run the hamlet, and adult males had to participate. Both the Igbo and Yoruba traditional systems gave women a significant amount of participation, but the Hausa traditional system did not, as the men are religiously forbidden to bow or accept orders from women, and the Hausa's dominant religion opposed the idea of women participating in the government and politics of the society (Abdullahi, 1979). Youth were also involved in the Yoruba traditional system through "Egbe Odo," the youth wing, whose goal was to advance youth interests as a group by voicing their thoughts on public concerns (Crowder, 1978).

However, it is evident from the data at hand that youthful engagement in Nigerian politics and government dates back to the formation of what is now known as Nigeria (Akinrinde & Omitola, 2020). It is also vital to note that, even before pre-colonial Nigeria fell into the powerful hands of colonialism, their contribution to the political order of the country was not only constructive but also crucial to its survival. Evidently, the political culture and values that were prevalent among young people during this time influenced the proper political attitudes and behaviors, such as tolerance, patience, patriotism, a sense of community, and general good behavior, which were displayed by young people in the political sphere. These characteristics characterized Nigerian youth prior to colonialism. Consequently, there is a connection between the political culture of pre-colonial Nigeria and the actions of Nigerian youth (Akinrinde Omito 2020).

### ***2.2.2 Youths Political Participation: Review of the Political System in Colonial Nigeria***

Obviously, youth continued to play a significant part in politics throughout colonial periods in Nigeria as they had done in pre-colonial times. The youthful vitality and political consciousness of the pre-colonial period collided with the nationalist sentiment that characterized the youth of the colonial period (Akinrinde Omitola. 2020).

Unquestionably, this motivation was a reflection of the ideal political culture that the young people of this era had been socialized into, which affected their functions, conducts, and actions in the colonial political system (Akinrinde & Omitola, 2020). Objectively, the colonial period witnessed the pinnacle of the accomplishments made by the youths and students in the fight for Nigeria's independence and long-term political growth, both in the state and grassroots levels (Olusanya, 1980). An undisputed testimony to the quality of role played by the youth and students in colonial Nigerian political order was the historic formation of the West African Students Union (WASU) which was poised to promoting the plight of not only Nigerian students but the West African students at large, and to sensitize the West African people about the ills of Imperialism. Notable individuals like Julius Ojo-cole, Herbert Macauley and others campaigned against discriminatory colonial educational policies against West African Students at home and abroad. To its credit, it successfully stopped the exploitative African Village exhibition in Newcastle intended for West African Students in Britain. In its quest to resist all forms of discrimination and exploitation against the West African Students and to banish Imperialism, WASU founded some of its branches in Gold Coast (Now Ghana), Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Congo which later led

the formation of Nigerian Youth Movement in Nigeria and the Gold Coast Youth Conference in Ghana (Akinrinde & Ornitola, 2020).

In an effort to free their particular communities from the control of the colonial oppressors, these youth organizations led the fight against the evils of imperialism and colonialism (Olusanya, 1980). However, internal conflict among their numerous executives caused this movement to stop prematurely, which finally gave rise to establishment of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) in Nigeria in 1956. The National Association of Nigerian Students was dedicated to the welfare of solely Nigerian students, in contrast to the West African Students Union's concentration on the West African region (Akinrinde & Omitola, 2020). The Nigerian youths actively awoke the necessary political consciousness within themselves through this platform in their collective struggle against the unjust and exploitative policies aimed directly at the Nigerian students by the colonial administration of Nigeria and the military head of state in extension after the achievement of independence. Even in the early days of Nigeria's independence, it continued its operations, and Nigerian youth involvement in anti-colonialist efforts was felt even still after the Independence of Nigeria. (Akinrinde & Omitola, 2020).

As a result, it is important to note that the elevated amount of activism, nationalistic zeal, patriotism, unity of purpose, constructive criticism, and sense of civic and societal responsibility displayed by the Nigerian youth during the colonial era were essentially mirrors of the political culture and value of self-government, nationalism, selflessness, and disciplined politics (Akinrinde & Omitola, 2020). It suffices to say that, throughout this period of decolonization, Nigerian youths played a patriotic role as agents of change and emancipation as

well as resistance forces against the political wrongdoings of the colonial authority. 2020 (Akinrinde & Omitola).

### ***2.2.3 Youth political participation: The Political System of Post-Colonial Nigeria***

Records show that Nigerian youths in their individual and collective groupings were considered important members of the Nigerian body politic throughout the early years of the nation's existence and were organizationally and operationally successful (Carlisle, 2015). According to Whyte (2013), the Nigerian youths in their separate formations are a force to be reckoned with when it comes to mobilization and operations against social problems, military dictatorship, national issues, capacity building and retention initiatives. As further states, *"Whenever Nigerian students catch cold, the entire Nation gets cold"* (Carlisle, 2015).

This reflects the culture and identity of Nigerian students and youngsters in the early stages of the country, a culture unaffected by financial factors. Similar to this, the fact that the majority of Nigerian students took part in the struggle for independence during the early years of the country's, which allowed for the transmission of the ideal political culture that inspired the nation's youth to take nationalistic actions during the colonial era (Akinrinde & Omitola, 2020). Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe, Chief Anthony Enahoro, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Ernest Okoli, and many more stood out among them. They participated in Nigerian politics at both the local and national levels while fighting for Nigeria's independence (Akinrinde & Omitola, 2020). Famous Nigerian students like Wole Soyinka, G.T.G. Toby, and all Nigerian students collectively have their political perspectives influenced by this still-viable political culture. From the First

Republic to the Third Republic, Nigerian students' passionate drive and consciousness were regarded as insatiable (Akinrinde & Omitola, 2020).

This was obvious, although still debatably, in the enthusiasm of the young soldiers headed by Major Chukwuemeka Nzeogwu as well as other Eastern soldiers, who staged the first coup d'état on January 15, 1966 in an effort to purge the nation's polity of the ethnic politics, political violence, and poor resource management that plagued it. 2015 (Carlisle). Although the Northern portion of the Military, who sustained the greatest losses, misinterpreted this and responded with a counterattacks on the basis that the coup had an ethnic motive. Similar to this, the Ali Must Go Saga accurately portrayed the role performed at this time by Nigerian youngsters and students (Carlisle, 2015). They were unified in their purpose of replacing Ali Muhammad, the Minister of Education during Shehu Shagari's administration, for his mismanagement of the education sector, and they became successful. This, along with their determination in the dysfunctional Third Republic under the umbrella of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) to make sure that the true winner of the June 12, 1993 National election, Chief M.K.O Abiola according to election results, was sworn in as the President of the Nation, all this speaks volumes about their role, conduct, behavior, and what they were known for at the time (Almond & Verba, 1963).

This also underscores their critical role in Nigeria's ongoing drive for sustainable development. However, the dynamics of the contemporary Nigerian political system, as well as the role, conduct, behavior, and method of political engagement of youths in governance in the Fourth Republic, are cause for concern, especially when compared to the pre-colonial and colonialist epochs. The activism, political sophistication, and consciousness that Nigerian youths were known for suddenly appear to have never been or to be extinct in modern times (Akinrinde &

Omitola, 2020). As a result, modern Nigerian students/youth have displayed political behaviors like thuggery, terrorism, violence, the get-rich-quick syndrome, the win at any costs syndrome, corruption, and many more, which have pushed Nigeria's political ship to an unfavorable position. Of course, this indicates that Nigerian youth are also complicit in these horrible deeds, and as a result, they lack the rationale to engage the perpetrators of these crimes in constructive dialogue and to fulfill their responsibility as the engine of societal advancement. (Akinrinde & Omitola 2020).

#### ***2.2.4 Nigeria's youth context for political participation and democratic development***

The Eastern, Southern, and Western regions of Nigeria were able to establish institutionalized democratic liberal government in place as a result of the transition from military rule in Nigeria in 1999. (Jackson, 2015, p. 2). This has prompted a new discussion on how crucial political participation is to Nigeria's ability to have a functioning democratic government (Andrews,n.d.; Buser, 2013). The execution of consultative and procedural aspects of democratic government, such as free and fair elections, institutional development, and structure, were initially evaluated by researchers to assess the extent of democratization in each region. However, it has become increasingly clear that, even in the presence of these crucial democratic institutions, the quality of democratic governance in these regions varies greatly (Andrews, n.d.). The main argument is that because the emphasis was on the outcome rather than the process, multi-party voting was equated to democratic governance, oblivious to the requirement for a more level democratic government system through citizen involvement. Based on the results of numerous studies on citizen engagement in more recent democratic governments, it is particularly difficult because, according to Bevir (2011),

citizenship is absent from both formal and informal structures of political engagement, such as voting and political parties, as well as from interest group participation and demonstrations (Vite & Dibang-Achua, 2019a).

Although procedural democracy may have been implemented, there are certain unavoidable restrictions on accountability and responsibility for the proper representation of elected delegates (Reeves, 2016). Vite & Dibang-Achua (2019a) claim that this has led academics to reevaluate the relationship between political involvement and democratization and to start rating the effectiveness of Nigeria's democratic system using the range of criteria suggested in the articles on consolidating democracy (Bevir, 2011; Vite, 2018). As a result, in contrast to consolidation, the study on quality democracy is primarily focused on the processes of democratization rather than its outcomes (Vite, 2018). Research on effective democracies takes into account not just the presence of democratic structures, but also their viability in promoting participation, ensuring transparency, and advancing political and socioeconomic fairness (Dzur, 2016).

Dynamic or active political participation by individuals is frequently seen as a significant model of improved democratic system under the broad criteria used by top notch democracy (Vite, 2018). This is shown by the meaning or definition of a quality democratic system provided by Matiki (2008) and Nkechi (2014), who noted that quality democratic government is high when we view in the permanent residency engagement broadly, not only by voting but also in the daily lives of the citizen in political rallies, gatherings and civil society associations, in the discussion of public policy issues, in speaking with and require responsibility and accountability from the voted leaders, in observing the responsibilities and accountability from the voted leaders, as well as direct participation in political issues close to them.

It becomes evident that this democratic mechanism goes beyond the procedural base indicators used by some accounts of democratic government consolidations and attempts to find common ground with proponents of the democratic participatory system by highlighting the importance of diverse representation as well as the interconnection between citizens and delegates. Despite the general character of democracy, scholars have successfully classified different forms of fundamentally democratic administration using its qualities or norms (Gaffney & Marlowe, 2014).

Thus, rather than measuring the inconsistent nature of connections between citizens and government, this can be demonstrated by using a quantitative approach as an indicator that is appropriate for measuring and analysing the extent to which the Federal Government of Nigeria has implemented a procedural democratic system (Udoffia & Godson, 2016; Vite, 2018). As a result, some studies offer less information regarding the relationship between political participation and democratization processes. These studies specifically lack the capacity to provide detailed information about region- and age-specific political engagement patterns, and the influence of the procedures of democratization in Nigeria because they rely on data or information that measures the amount of political participation in each region in comparison to a national scale (Vite, 2018)

Understanding how and why young people get involved in politics or don't is crucial for evaluating the effectiveness of a democratic system of governance. Research in developed democratic governance systems has found that young people's political engagement frequently differs from that of older people or groups, and that governments' refusal to acknowledge this difference may lead to feelings of alienation and marginalization (Andrews,n.d.). Therefore, this may show a discrepancy between citizens and decision-makers and emphasize how

slowly policies react to citizens' demands. These are the major factors to improve effective democracies (Nkechi, 2014; Vite, 2018).

Compared to more experienced democratic regimes, less experienced democratic administrations are less visible to include young people (Freeman, 2013; Gaby, 2016). It is unclear whether the lack of participation is due to the fundamental political, social, and economic changes brought about by democratization or whether there is an underlying contrast with the patterns of young people's engagement seen in traditional (established) democratic systems. This reflects the poor manifestation of citizenship engagement in post-military populations. To enable decision-makers to react to the requirements of young in a more modern democratic government system and improve the form and quality of democratic government in Nigeria, this claim has to be explained (Vite, 2018).

### **2.2.5 Why Nigerian Youths Engage in Politics**

Participating by citizens in politics is a crucial component of democratic government anywhere in the globe, including Nigeria. The form of citizenship and the level of political engagement can affect the scope and effectiveness of government and management. Many Nigerian residents, especially the youth, participate in politics or other governance-related activities for a variety of reasons. They consist of:

**To revamp the way leadership and government are organized.** Some Nigerian youths are involved in politics in an effort to change the system in order to usher in effective political leadership and the anticipated developments. They are fixated on the leadership styles of previous leaders that do not have a positive impact on the lives of common people on the streets of Nigeria, the persistence of poverty in

the midst of plenty, the marginalization of some regions of the nation, and the unequal distribution of resources. This reality is indicated by the creation of more than one hundred political parties as well as by the activity of many interest groups and civil liberties organizations.

**To have an impact on government policies and initiatives.** The campaigns launched by groups like the Social Economic Recovery and Accountability Project (SERAP) and Muslim Rights Concerns (MURIC), as well as protests organized by Labor and Civil Liberty Organizations, have forced the government to take action on social-political issues that have an impact on Nigerians' socioeconomic well-being. For instance, the government has reviewed worker pay and recovered stolen money as a result of the Nigeria Labour Congress' (NLC's) campaign for a review of the minimum wage and SERAP's whistleblowing action. The revolution Now, equally was a deliberate attempt by young people to inform the government of the shortcomings of its socioeconomic policies and the necessity for an inclusive administration that might improve people's lives (Vite & Dibang-Achua, 2019a).

**Involvement in the decision-making process.** To influence governmental choices, pro-democracy organizations participate in protests and demonstrations, sponsor private citizen bills, and contribute to public debates on proposed legislation. For instance, Charles Oputa's "*Our-Mumu-Don-Do*" and Obiageli Ezekwezili's "*Bring-Back-Our-Girls*" campaigns were clearly aimed at altering the existing quo. On the one side, the Bring-Back-Our-Girls Movement's activities compelled the government to take all reasonable measures to save some of the Chibok girls who had been abducted by terrorists. Contrarily, the "*Our-Mumu-Don-Do*" Movement led by Charles Oputa compelled the President to shorten his

medical vacation in Britain in order to address the security issues and other socioeconomic problems plaguing the nation (Vite & Dibang-Achua, 2019b).

**To seek for positions of authority and representation.** Some young people get involved in politics in an effort to gain leadership positions, whether via campaigning for political office or even being appointed to one. The Not-Too-Young-To-Rule Proposed legislation is a positive development since it gives young people the opportunity to run for political posts from which they were previously barred due to age barrier. Unfortunately, despite how admirable the notion may appear, Nigeria's socio-political system is biased in favor of the retired military elite, the intelligentsia, and the country's powerful businesses. to advocate for growth and social harmony. The activities of SERAP, which were previously mentioned, as well as those of other regional pressure groups, including the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta (MEND), Niger-Delta Frontier Force (NDF), The Ijaw Youth Movements (IYM), Ohanaeze Ndigbo youth wing, Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) youth wing, the Afenifere, and the Middle-Belt Forum youth The Ministry of Niger-Delta Development and the Niger-Delta Development Commission were established in response to the IYM's severe agitation through the Kaima Declaration and the necessity for the government to appease the region's young. In light of the devastating effects of terrorism and insurgency in the region, recent efforts by the ACF as well as those of the Northern Elders Forum have resulted in the foundation of the North East Development Commission. Additionally, the Middle-Belt is pushing for the establishment of a similar commission in their area (Vite, 2018).

**For the sake of socialization.** Nigerian youth participate in politics for sociopsychological as well as financial reasons. Some of them imbibe the mindset,

guiding ideas, and tactics of successful politics from charismatic and well-known politicians.

### **2.2.6 Why Nigerian youth avoid political participation**

**Fear of being imprisoned by the state.** Fear of being imprisoned by the state. Some young people in Nigeria are apolitical and uninterested in government initiatives. Because certain government officials despise criticism, any effort to do so is met with hostility, unlawful arrest, and other violations of the law. Additionally, banning social media, political, and religious organizations as well as passing the Hate Speech Bill are indirect methods of putting an end to agitating voices. This increased young people's disinterest in political activism.

**Fear of being killed, maimed, or assassinated (political hooliganism).** The retreat and disinterest of certain youth in political discussions impacting their localities has also been attributed to the dread of maiming and politically motivated assassinations. In Nigeria, political opponents are frequently murdered, abducted, and assassinated during election campaigns. The country has seen a large number of fatalities as a result of cult organizations' brigandage to highlight aspirants who share their goals.

**Blackmailing.** One defining aspect of Nigerian politics is blackmail. Politics and smear campaigns, character assassination, and propaganda are intertwined. As a result, rectitudinous youths who want to maintain their moral purity are frequently observed to distance themselves from political involvement. They frequently refer to

politics as a "dirty game" played by political dropouts and school dropouts, which explains why. In 2019a, Vite and Dibang-Achua ascertain to that.

**Indiscipline.** Political infidelity, as evidenced by rampant theft from the public coffers, rapacious and heartless spending of taxpayer funds, the display of wealth without restraint, and various violations of human rights, has a tendency to deter some young people from participating in politics while also influencing others.

**Sabotage.** Some young people have refrained from politics due to some of them being dishonest. Government initiatives, including schools, roads, and water projects and supplies, for example, have become ineffective and wasteful due to poor and unpleasant contract execution. Politics is frequently made despicable to certain youths by the blatant damage of government property by politicians and their friends (Udoffia & Godson, 2016).

### **2.2.7 Students' Union in Nigeria**

A common student group at many colleges, universities, and high schools of learning is the Students' Union . The Students' Union often receives a building of its own on the campus. It is dedicated to provide the students with a strong voice. Therefore, the goal of the Students' Union is to advocate for students internally and outside, particularly when it comes to regional, global, and even worldwide concerns. In an effort to provide a strong and healthy academic atmosphere, it is also devoted to social and organizational activities (Okeke, 2010).

It should be highlighted that certain student groups have become so politically charged that they act as a breeding ground for future politicians. However, regardless of the level of partisanship, students' unions often have

similar goals, concentrating on offering facilities, support, and services. A student union's primary goal is to help students with difficulties, whether those problems are scholastic in character or of a more broad political, economic, or societal one. In reality, through promoting social, cultural, and other extracurricular events taking place in the neighborhood, a student union is anticipated to have a beneficial influence on its surrounding area (Okeke, 2010).

In Nigeria, Students' Union is a precipitate of Several Nigerian students in London helped form the West African Student Union (WASU), which was founded partially by them. The WASU, which was led by Solanke and Bankole-Bright, pushed for better conditions for all London students. The National Union of Nigerian Students (NUNS), which made its debut at the University of Ibadan, was created as a result of their influence in Nigeria. All tertiary institutions in Nigeria are covered by the wings of NUNS, presently known as NANS (National Association of Nigerian Students). Africans were freed from colonial tutelage through WASU's fight against the colonial rulers for their rights. The Student Union and WASU joined forces as a forum for advocacy and change. (Okeke, 2010).

It is evident that the Nigerian Student Union was dedicated to the benefit of all Nigerian people, not only students. As a result, academics and radical intellectuals supported the merger. The union leaders were firebrands and genuine idealists. Under Segun Okeowo's direction, NUNS got active in national politics to advocate for adequate funding of education for Nigerian students (Okeke, 2010). Nigerian students under NUNS endured a variety of forms of abuse but persisted in their struggle against the forces of authoritarianism, parochialism, and feudalism in our political system despite it (Okeke, 2010). To corroborate this fact about NUNS, Tanimu Umar (2018:1) noted that In Nigeria, student unionism had

a reputation for being a formidable force. In the good old days, students were well-known for standing firm in their criticism of the injustices of our leaders through their unions, leading to significant improvements. There were times when authorities and students engaged in combat when diplomatic measures proved unsuccessful; one such incident is the 1978 ABU students' riot (Umar, 2018). Many students died during the rebellion as they protested the removal of Colonel Ahmadu Ali, who served as the country's education minister at the time. The "Ali Must Go" riot, like many others in those times, was a significant victory for student unionism in Nigeria; it helped our leaders to see that students are aware of their rights and capable of resisting oppression despite threats. (Umar, 2018).

From the foregoing, it is unequivocal that Students' Union in Nigeria was a bastion against the repressive, oppressive, dictatorial and tyrannical tendencies of not only the colonial masters but also the Nigerian post-colonial state's actors. It therefore appropriate to affirm that Students' Unions in Nigeria have played the watchdog role in monitoring the abuses of the colonial and post-colonial governments. The Students' Union was essentially a pressure organization at that time, working to improve governance, education, self-rule, and other aspects of life for both the general public and the student population in particular (Goodluck, 2013). As a result, they opposed whatever they deemed unfavorable and unconstitutional with steadfastness and without fear, and because of their just, impartial, and honest approach, they have largely been successful in attaining their intended goals (Goodluck, 2013).

Furthermore, Students' Unions in Nigeria have vehemently opposed the official high handedness, despotic and nonchalant attitude of authorities in the various tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The seemingly incessant protests, riots and demonstrations over epileptic power and water supply, arbitrary hike of school

fees and the lack of or inadequacy of learning aids in our campuses attests to the fact that Students Unions in Nigeria have become the voice of the "Wretched of the earth" and a force to be reckoned with (Goodluck, 2013). It should be regrettably noted that in most cases, these protests, riots and demonstrations have led to the closure of the institutions and the concomitant distortion of academic calendar and the late graduation of Nigerian students. A good example of such is the student peaceful protest in the University of Benin against the additional ₦20,000 for late school fee payment by the school management, which lasted for two days from 14th -15th , November, 2021. This resulted into the total shut down of academy activities and even the blockage of the Benin-Lagos road from motorist.

In addition, apart from the epochal "Ali Must Go" riot in 1978, Nigerian students under the aegis of Students' Union spoke with one voice and protested against the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) and the unrest in Nigeria's educational institutions. In such protests, the majority of the students either suffered injuries or died. May their souls rest in perfect peace. "Aluta Continua, Victoria Acerta". The struggle must continue. However, given the realities in the polity of Nigeria and the state of students' unionism in Nigeria can we still beat our chest and say boldly that Nigerian students are still in the struggle? However, As far as we are concerned, the Students' Union is a pressure group whose input is necessary in the democratic process of the state. However before then, the democratic implication of Students' Union will be analyzed

### **2.2.8 Democratic Implications of Students' Union in Nigeria**

Democracy is a kind of governance that enables the citizen to involve either either directly through their representatives in the decision-making process or indirectly. Participation, hence becomes a key value of democracy. Other important values or tenets of democracy include accountability, transparency, social justice, rule of law and vibrant opposition. These democratic values or tenets are to make certain that the "general will" of the populace wins out. The general will of the people reflects the popular opinion or choice of the people which in most cases is a product of free, fair and credible electoral process Wonah (2010). The essence of free, fair and credible elections and other democratic values is not only to have credible leaders who represent the people's preferred choice but also to ensure that the leaders are attentive and accountable to the needs and desires of the people as they are the ones who may choose who will lead them. Wonah (2010).

In a plural society, like Nigeria, where you have different competing and contending groups, democracy ensures that the groups are carried along by giving them a sense of belonging. Thus, a democratic government becomes a clearing house for the pressure groups as it harmonizes the ever conflicting interests in society, ensures that it promotes the welfare of the populace, protects lives and property, and ensures that limited resources are divided equally and fairly. Pressure groups are natural in every society Wonah (2010). According to Ray (2003), Any organized organization that works to sway opinions without attempting to exert formal governmental authority is referred to as a pressure group. Pressure group also articulate and in some cases aggregate interest. It is expected that the interests through the "conversion box" of a democratic government manifest as policies and programmes of the government.

These policies and programmes were formulated and designed to ensure that the interests are aggregated so as to continue maintaining build and stabilize the political system. The point here is that pressure groups are part of the democratic process as they act as “watch dogs” in the political system. Pressure groups can lobby for favourable laws, policies and programmes of government and they can also oppose or protest against draconian or obnoxious laws, policies and programmes of government. Students’ Union in Nigeria are pressure groups and are part of the democratic process. The demise or inaction of Students’ Union in Nigeria would mean creating a dangerous lacuna in the democratic process, especially as it concerns the educational system in Nigeria.

As a precondition for democracy, there is the need for a pre-existing sense of community in a nation. The elites must be willing to play competitive roles and serve the public rather than conducting themselves as drones of privileged individuals who seek only to take advantages of their elite status. (Nnoli, 2011:19). IDEA (2000) quoted the opinion of an Activist in Port Harcourt when he said that Democracy is about empowering local people to run their own lives, manage their own resources, and make power flow from them rather than the other way around. (IDEA, 2000).

Additionally, the internalization and practice of democratic culture, according to Wonah (2010), is more significant than simply having democratic institutions. Thus, a country may have democratic institutions but if democratic culture is not imbibed and demonstrated by the people, democracy becomes a mirage and Students’ Union as a pressure group will be rendered superfluous Wonah (2010).

### **2.2.9 Politics and Students' Union in Nigeria**

Politics in a polity affect the democratization process. The state and political system grow more democratic as politics becomes more sophisticated in terms of carrying out fundamental governmental responsibilities through the government. The state uses politics to carry out certain fundamental duties as distributing limited resource fairly and equally, balancing the constantly contradicting interests of people, defending people's property and lives and advancing the wellbeing of the populace.

The fair and equal allocation of limited resources is at the heart of these fundamental operations. As a result, politics primarily concerns the allocation of limited resources. David Easton defined politics as the authorized distribution of values to support this assertion. Harold Lasswell, on the other hand, described politics as who gets what, how, and when. According to the liberal-democratic conception, the state is viewed as a manifestation of societal will, a tool for resolving disputes and safeguarding the common good (Nwaorgu, 2014). Democracy enables society to choose its own government, and it mandates that this government be accountable to the citizens and function with their perpetual permission. Therefore, it is clear that the state is a sign of authority, in addition to demanding the respect and obedience of its people, the state also carries out some necessary tasks for them, which gradually increases their obedient behavior. When Government fails in providing the basic needs of the citizen and her basic function it tends to loss it respect and cause for civil disobedience which will eventually result into revolt against the government. (Nwaorgu, 2014).

According to Pierson (1996), the state represents and communicates genuine (sovereign) will of the people. The state develops and carries out populist public policies and programs through its administration. As a result, the state

exists to serve the interests of the public, and individuals who hold public office are required to behave in accordance with the prevailing sentiment of the populace. Which means that politics through the state should recognize and uphold the general will of the people as rooted in democracy Pierson (1996).

Marxist philosophy, however, blames the state for any shortcomings in governance. Marxists hold that every government will act as a tool of the ruling class as long as society is split into dominant and dependent classes. As a result, according to Marxist theory, the state is a tool for class exploitation, marginalization, oppression, suppression, and subjection. This appears to be the case with politics and by extension the state in Nigeria. The heterogeneous nature of Nigerian society conform with the dynamics of group theory whereby the different ethnic groups fiercely competing for the limited resources of the state Wonah (2010).

This competition for the state's scarce resources must be regulated by cohesive politics (ie politics of understanding, tolerance and accommodation among the different ethnic and religious groups) and strong institution of the state. Regrettably, the divide-and-rule strategy of the colonial masters and the “marriage of inconvenience” orchestrated by the seemingly forceful amalgamation in 1914 exacerbated the fissiparous tendencies among the ethnic groups and infused ethnic politics into the body politics of Nigeria Wonah (2010). On the other hand, the players in the Nigerian state were seduced by a primitive accumulation mindset that led them to view the government and its institutions as tools for accumulating fortune. As a result, gaining power has turned into a life-or-death situation, and politics has turned into a zero-sum game (Ake, 1996). The implication of this is that corruption, exploitation, marginalization, oppression, suppression and subjugation have become the order of the day (Ake, 1996)

As a corollary, to the above negative implication, any opposition to the selfish, parochial and obnoxious laws, policies and programmes of the state is decisively crushed by the state's coercive apparatuses which is the tool of the state actors in Nigeria. For instance, the maiming and killing of defenseless students by armed security operatives during the "Ali Must Go" riot in 1978, anti-SAP riot in 1989, the killing of Peter Ofurum by security operative at University of Port Harcourt during a demonstration by the students against the arbitrary and insensitive increment of school fee by the school authorities, and the shooting at the End Sars youth protesters at Lekki toll gate in Lagos, and also most of these cases are denied by the government either by claiming nobody died (As the case of the endsar) or they claim it a necessary action to restore peace and uphold the riot from escalating. All these are pointers to the rascality of the state and politics in Nigeria. Rascal state and politics need radical, focused, unwavering, democratic and fire brand student unionism Wonah (2010).

Unfortunately, the asphyxiating rascal state and politics in Nigeria have incapacitated democratic institutions in Nigeria, particularly Students' Union. Student Union as a watch dog has been strongly tethered to a tree to the effect that it has become a toothless bull dog. More damaging and vexatious is that the primitive accumulation mentality and corruption by Nigerian public officers has seeped into the Student Union's government fabric. The effect is that Students' Union in Nigeria is now corrupt and partisan, thereby jettisoning democratic values and principles within the student community. Student Union are always friends with the School Management but what we have now is Student Union that are being controlled by that school management who have either pay them to buy their loyalty or help them get the office they occupy at the student government level Wonah (2010).

The Daily Trust claimed in December 2005, as recounted by Tanimu Umar, that the situation has just taken a drastic and depressing turn around, confirming the aforementioned truth. The National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) has been converted into a sycophantic cabal, making student unionism today nothing more than a lame duck. NANS and almost all of the Student Union Governments (SUGs) in our universities have remarkably transformed into beggars and cheerleaders for the unpopular Nigerian government. The National President of NANS in 2005, Kenneth Orkurna Hembe, said that Nigerian students had backed President Olusegun Obasanjo for his third term in office. The most recent instance of this is when a portion of NANS sponsored the Tinubu and Shetima presidential ticket. The student leaders have marketed student unionism for their own personal gain (Daily Trust, December 8, 2005). (Vanguard October 27, 2022). Apart from being sycophantic and deceptive, most student union leaders are corrupt. A situation where most student union (particularly SUGs) leaders before they leave office, buy cars, plots of land attests to the fact that most student union leaders see their offices as veritable means of enriching themselves. Rather than being committed and alive to the spirit of Aluta, most student union leaders are seen driving student union bus aimlessly and eating free food from registered food vendors on campus Wonah (2010). Unfortunately, it appears that this is their understanding of what student union is all about. During electioneering campaign into offices of student union, most of the students demand that their fellow students who are candidates for the election pay them marching ground, or buy them drinks before they can be given the opportunity to address the students. This is not only anti-democratic and reactionary, but also a reflection of what is happening in the wider political system of Nigeria Wonah (2010) Aside from ethnicity, undue influence mainly through cultism and money, most student union

elections are marred by electoral fraud and irregularities. The ability of the students to select their leaders is certainly hampered by this. Therefore, the majority of student union representatives don't represent student opinion or preferences. Wonah (2010).

The effect of this is that, student union leadership is no longer vibrant, committed, and sensitive and accountable for the students' perceived needs. Student union has also failed to be a bulwark against the oppressive, obnoxious and draconian actions, laws and politics of Nigerian state. Thus, rather than impacting positively on politics as a change agent, Nigeria's Students' Union has given in to the quirks and absurdities of the country's economy, society, and politics. Wonah (2010).

In fact the “dirty politics” in Nigeria seems to have eaten up vibrant and committed Student Union in Nigeria. The inability of student union to speak with one voice and protest against the senseless killing, deteriorating economic conditions, the voting against local government autonomy by some state houses of Assembly, the deplorable condition of our educational system and the official highhandedness of some school authorities, not only make students to be susceptible to oppressive and exploitative agents, but it is also a clear indication that Students Union is at the verge of extinction in Nigeria political system Wonah (2010).

## **2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This section reviews theories that may be helpful in comprehending the phenomena that underlies this research.

### ***2.3.1 Theoretical Framework (Structural- Functionalism)***

A sociological viewpoint known as the structural-functional approach views society as a complex system whose components interact to foster

cooperation and stability. It claims that social structures, which are generally dependable norms of social conduct, direct our lives. Our lives are shaped by social structures, such as those found in families, communities, and religious institutions. And certain customs, like a handshake or elaborate religious rites, offer our daily life shape. Every social structure has social functions or effects on how society as a whole works. For instance, education serves a number of crucial social purposes in a community, including socializing and learning. Durk and Hak (2007).

According to functionalism, society is made up of several components that operate together, much like an organism. Therefore, one of the key tenets of structural functionalism is that society is composed of organizations or groups that are cohesive, adhere to shared standards, and have a clear culture. Functionalism, according to Robert K. Merton, is focused on society's more fixed or tangible elements, including institutions like the government and religion. However, Structural Functionalist thought includes any organization big enough to constitute a social institution, from religious beliefs to sports teams and all in between. According to structural functionalism, the way society is set up is the most logical and effective way for it to be (Merton, 1973)

According to Ray, (2003), the fundamental theoretical tenet is that certain fundamental tasks must be carried out in any social organization. These functions are performed by the structures which are patterns of action and resultant institutions. A function is a regularly recurring pattern of action and behavior performed for the preservation and advancement of the system (Ray, 2003). On the other hand, dysfunction is an action detrimental to the existence and growth of the system (Robert Merton as cited in Ray, 2003). It should be emphasized that the

environment in which social or political systems work, as well as all other structures that comprise the system, is also a factor (Ray, 2003).

The settings here would mean specifically, the norms and values prevalent in that environment or society. Thus, the understanding of the efficacy of the structures in performing their functions for the stability, preservation and growth of the system is dependent on the prevalent values and norms which are imbibed and demonstrated by those occupants of the institutions or organizations that make up the social or political system. Students' Union in Nigeria is a part or structure of the social or political system of Nigeria and therefore performs or is expected to perform some functions, especially when considered as a pressure group in a democratic dispensation.

### ***2.3.2 Youths' Political Behaviors and Nigerian Political Culture: Theoretical Relationship***

According to Gabriel Almond's political culture thesis, which claimed that the degree of political development of any political system is a reflection of the kind of political culture displayed by its citizens, particularly by the youths who are typically the majority of the population of any society, it readily suggests that for proper capture of the role being played by the youths in the political shaping of every society, there is a need to understand the dominant political culture. Thus, the importance of Almond's academic book "The Civic Culture," which argues that three (3) fundamental orientations must be codified at all levels of government for a democratic system to mature (Almond & Verba, 1963).

The Cognitive, Affective, and Evaluative orientations were named by him. The cognitive orientation is concerned with identifying and being aware of the political culture, ethos, norms, and values present in a political system. There

would be no question that the current generation of Nigerian youths are aware of the dominant political culture and norm in the Nigerian political system if this expository of Almond were taken at face value and contrasted with the type of politics that are occurring in Nigerian university communities. But is it worthwhile to copy this dominant culture? And may this political culture influence how young people and the general public should behave politically? This study tries to provide answers to these questions (Almond & Verba, 1963).

The political culture of violence, money politics, electoral manipulation, ethnic politics, vote buying, vote selling, political assassinations, winner-takes-all syndrome, win-at-all-cost syndrome, and God-fatherism, among other things, have become the enduring norms in university politics and Nigeria's body polity as a whole, according to Azeez (2005) et al. It goes without saying that the majority of Nigerian youth and students are cognizant of the country's problematic political cultures, and whether they are aware of it or not, these cultures are influencing and modeling their actions and behaviors, as well as how they participate in politics. This explains why an elected executive of a student union would typically choose to serve his or her own self-interests at the expense of the student body he or she was elected to lead, or how one can explain the dubious support the National Association of Nigerian Students gave the third term bid of former President Olusegun Obasanjo (Whyte, 2013). When it was obvious that such a proposal had no foundation in the Nigerian constitution, where could this support have come from? I assume this will depend on the promised and financial arrangements. It would be dubious to conclude from this fact that young Nigerians are unaware of their country's political structure. It goes without saying that they are cognizant of the dominant political culture of social negatives, which continues to influence their actions and attitudes in campus politics (Babawale, 1999).

The Affective orientation is a different political orientation that Gabriel Almond suggests exists in every political system (Almond & Verba, 1963). This has to do with how the prevalent political culture in the political system affects and influences individuals inside a specific political system. The implication of this is that whether a political system's dominant political culture or norm is favorable or unfavorable, it always impacts and influences people's political attitudes, behaviors, and actions. However, in the Nigerian context, election fraud, political assassination, corruption, blackmail, and godfatherism are all evident manifestations of ethnic, religious, and primal politics. Nigerian young are now and over time being socialized with these political cultures and conventions, which is impacting their political attitudes and conduct. A typical Nigerian youngster would therefore perceive nothing wrong with partaking in these political vices since, to them, the culture and customs in question are not novel; rather, they have evolved into a way of life. This, for example, explains why some Nigerian youth and students by extension accepted to be used to perpetrate violence across the country. This can be since during and even after elections in Nigeria, where youth and even student in extension are used to perpetrate violence in various polling units throughout the Nation. In reality, the youth in Nigeria are now leading the way in terms of these terrible behaviors and diseases, rather than these unfavorable political cultures having an influence on them. Evidence also suggests that the majority of political killings, including those of Dr. Ayo Daramola, a former World Bank consultant and PDP candidate for governor of Ekiti (assassinated in 2006), and Engr. Funsho Williams, a PDP candidate for governor of Lagos who was shot dead in his home in Ikoyi (assassinated in 2006), were committed by assassins who were thought to be in their youth (The Nation, 2006).

The Evaluative Orientation is one of Almond's three crucial orientations, and it's also the third. This refers to the awareness and capacity of people or citizens generally to examine and analyze the political system to determine whether the political system is more or less effective. Of course, given that all of the political actors in modern Nigeria are equally complicit in the system's rot, it is nearly impossible for the youth, much alone the whole populace, to examine and evaluate the political system and its actors objectively. Due to their equal involvement in the political vices that surround the corrupt political system, modern Nigerian youths lack the basis to question the acts and inactions of public office holders. This is in contrast to youths in pre-colonial and colonial eras (Okunniwa, 2010).

In light of the many unfavorable political acts committed by Nigerian youth, it is urgently important to emphasize that some members of the larger group of Nigerian youth have demonstrated and are still demonstrating the admirable political values necessary for societal advancement on a number of occasions. Famous young professionals and technocrats have tirelessly fought for some of these political goals. Examples include the joint campaign against subsidy removal in 2012, in which Nigerian young person at home and abroad participated as required; the Bring Back Our Girls campaign in 2013, even though it was led by a woman in her 50s who was relatively old, Oby Ezekwesili; some Nigerian youths nonetheless participated as required, The campaign against Police brutality, the end SARs which was basically a movement carried out by Nigeria youth, that also saw the death of many youth in Lekki toll, Lagos on 20th October, 2020 and even the most recent protest by students from different University against the prolong strike of the Academic staff of University Union (ASUU) that lasted for 8 months from February to September 2022. However, it is reasonable to claim that the

Negative elements are evident when seen in relation to the political wrongs committed by Nigerian youths as a whole in the country's political arena as a whole (Whyte, 2013). Therefore, corrective action is urgently needed to return today's Nigerian youth cum students to the road of honor for which they were renowned in the past, prior to the advent of the fourth republic, where their actions and vision have been neglected.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Study Design**

The cross-sectional survey research design will be used for the investigation. This kind of survey only includes data from a portion of the population that has been carefully chosen to be representative of the entire population. A study of this kind that used a survey methodology gave the researcher the opportunity to make generalizations to a broader target group at a lower cost and in less time.

#### **3.1 Study Area**

The research will be conducted in University of Benin, Ovia North East Local Government, of Edo State, Nigeria.

#### **3.2 Population of the Study**

Population refers to all instances or people who meet a given criteria. Keringer (1981) stated that "all members of any well-defined class of persons, events, or subjects, which may be living or non-living things," constitute the population. The populations of this study will consist of the 66,000 students between level 200-600 from the 14 faculties in University of Benin in Ovia-North East Local Government.

#### **3.3 Sample Size**

One hundred (100) randomly chosen respondents who are University of Benin students in the Ovia-North East Local Government make up the sample size for this study.

### **3.4 Sampling Techniques**

Simple random sampling and systematic sampling are the two methods of sampling that will be used for the investigation. For questionnaire administration, students will be selected from level 200 to level 600 from 14 faculties through systematic sampling method. Additionally, care will be taken to keep a gender balance.

### **3.6 Instruments for Data Collection**

The questionnaire is the primary tool used in this investigation. All 100 research participants were given the same set of questions to complete through an online means so every respondent can do this at the comfort of their home with a settled mind and upright thinking, with the provision of just a link to the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of close ended and Likert Scale questions that are related to the theme of the study.

### **3.6 Methods of Data Analysis**

The data is analyzed using Simple descriptive statistics such as simple percentage, tables and graphic illustrations will be used in presenting the findings of the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### 4.0 INTRODUCTION

The data that were gathered throughout the research are presented and explained in this chapter. The variables in the data that was gathered are represented and shown in tables. A simple percentage was used for the data analysis, and the tested research question was used to describe the outcome. The analysis was conducted utilizing the approach that was already described in the chapter before.

#### 4.1 ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENT BIO

The demographic information of the respondents including their age, sex, social class, and religious affiliation is reported in this section. The goal of this bio-analysis is to provide a succinct explanation that supports the study respondents' experiences, which are illustrated below.

**Table 4.1.1: *Gender of Respondents***

<b>Sex</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
Female	52	55.32%
Male	42	44.68%
Total	94	100%

Source: field survey, 2022

The above Table 4.1.1 shows that the majority of questionnaire respondents were Female, which is 52 representing 55.32% and the Male respondents are 42 representing 44.68%.

**Table 4.1.2: Age***Age of respondents*

<b>Sex</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
≤ 20	24	25.53%
21-25	55	58.51%
26-30	12	12.77%
≥31	3	3.19%
Total	94	100%

Source: field survey, 2022

The above Table 4.1.2 shows that 24 respondents which is 25.53% are 20 years and below of age, 55 respondents representing 58.51% are between age 21 - 25, 12 respondents which is 12.77% are between age 26 -30, while 3 respondents which is 3.19% are 30 years and above.

**Table 4.1.3: Marital status***Marital Status of Respondents*

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
Single	89	94.68%
Married	5	5.32%
Divorced	0	0%
Widowed	0	0%
Total	94	100%

Source: field survey, 2022

From the above table 4.1.3 we discovered that 89 of our respondents are single representing 94.68%, while 5 are married representing 5.32%, none of our respondents is divorced, and none of the respondents is widowed.

**Table 4.1.4: Education Specification**

*Educational qualification of respondents*

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>No. of respondent</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
SSCE	82	87.23%
NCE/OND	12	12.77%
Total	94	100%

Source: field survey, 2022

The Table 4.1.4 shows that 82 respondent which represents 87.23% of the total respondent attained SSCE and 12 of our respondent which represents 12.77% of the total respondents has attained NCE or OND.

**Table 4.1.5: Religion**

*Religion of respondents.*

<b>Religion</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Christianity	79	84.04%
Islam	14	14.89%
ATR	1	1.07%
Others	0	0%
Total	94	100%

Source: field survey, 2022

Table 4.1.5 above shows that most respondents which are 79 are Christians by religion representing 84.04% of the total research population, while 14 of the respondents are Islam by religion and represent 14.89% of the research population and Just 1 respondent representing 1.07% of the research population practice ATR.

## 4.2 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

**Table 4.2.1:** Do you agree that youth involvement in politics is vital because they are important part of the society?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agreed	72	76.59%
Agreed	17	18.08%
Undecided	5	5.32%
Disagreed	0	0%
Strongly Disagreed	0	0%
Total	94	100%

Source: field survey, 2022

From table 4.2.1 above, 76.59% of respondents Strongly Agree, 18.08% of respondents Agree, 5.32% of respondents are Undecided and 0% of respondents Disagreed or strongly disagreed.

It's inferred that most of the respondents agree that youth involvement in politics is vital because they are important part of the society, because from the table 76.59% strongly Agree and 18.08% Agree.

**Table 4.2.2:** Do you think that political sensitization can build the political participation of students and youth in general?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly agreed	53	56.38%
Agreed	37	39.36%
Undecided	2	2.13%
Disagreed	2	2.13%
Strongly Disagreed	0	0%
Total	94	100%

Source: field survey, 2022

From the above table, 56.38% respondents Strongly Agree, 39.36% of respondents Agree, 2.13% of respondents are Undecided and 2.13% of respondents also disagree.

From the analysis, we deduce that a majority of the respondents believe that political sensitization can build the political participation of students and youths in general because 54.8% and 38.4% of respondents strongly agree and agree respectively.

**Table 4.2.3:** Can good representation of past student political leaders/politicians influence future students' political participation?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly agreed	49	52.13%
Agreed	39	41.49%
Undecided	0	0%
Disagreed	5	5.32%
Strongly Disagreed	1	1.06%
Total	94	100%

Source: field survey, 2022

From the above table, 52.13% of respondents Strongly Agree, 41.49% of respondents Agree, 0% of respondents were Undecided, 5.2% of respondents Disagreed and 1.06% of respondents Strongly Disagree.

It can be inferred that the respondents to the questions accepted that good representation of past students' political leaders/politicians can influence students' political participation as the analysis shows that a higher amount of respondents Strongly Agree and also Agree with a percentage of 52.13% and 41.49% respectively.

**Table 4.2.4:** Do you agree that the absence of School Management influence in students' politics will improve the participation of student in politics?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly agreed	33	35.11%
Agreed	38	40.43%
Undecided	14	14.89%
Disagreed	6	6.38%
Strongly disagreed	3	3.19%
Total	94	100%

Source: field survey, 2022

From the above table, 35.11% of the respondents Strongly Agree, 40.43% of respondents Agree, 14.89% of respondents were Undecided, 6.38% of respondents Disagreed while 3.19% of respondents Strongly Disagree.

It will be then safe to say that the respondents to the questions accepted that the absence of School Management influence in students' politics will improve the participation of student in politics as the analysis shows that a higher amount of

respondents Strongly Agree and Agree with a percentage of 35.11% and 40.43% respectively.

**Table 4.2.5:** Do you think the University of Benin SUG elections always have a low turnout of voters because of the lack of interest of voters influenced by lack of concern to student welfare by Student politicians / leaders?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly agreed	27	28.72%
Agreed	33	35.11%
Undecided	13	13.83%
Disagreed	16	17.02%
Strongly Disagreed	5	5.32%
Total	94	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2022

From the above table, 28.72% of respondents Strongly Agree, 35.11% of respondents Agree, 13.83% of respondent are Undecided, 17.02% of respondents Disagreed and 5.32% of respondents strongly disagreed.

It can be inferred from the analysis that most of the respondents think the University of Benin SUG elections always have a low turnout of voters because of the lack of interest of voters influenced by lack of concern to student welfare by Student politicians/leaders because of the 28.72% and 35.11% of the Strongly agree and Agree column.

**Table 4.2.6:** Do you think that Student Union Election in the University of Benin is Free and Fair, Judging from the 2020/2021 SUG election?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
-----------------	------------------	-----------------------

Strongly agreed	45	47.87
Agreed	30	31.92%
Undecided	10	10.64%
Disagreed	8	8.51%
Strongly Disagreed	1	1.06%
Total	94	100%

Source Field Survey, 2022

From the above table, 47.87% of the respondents strongly Agreed, 31.92% of the respondent agreed, 10.64% of the respondent were undecided, 8.51% of respondent Disagreed and 1.06% of the respondents Strongly Disagreed.

It can be deduced that the majority of respondents on this questionnaire concurred with the fact that Student Union Election in the University of Benin is Free and Fair, Judging from the 2020/2021 SUG election because 47.87% and 31.92% Strongly agree and Agreed respectively.

**Table 4.2.7:** Do you Think SUG election in the University of Benin is influenced by the school management?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly agreed	12	12.76%
Agreed	21	22.34%
Undecided	33	35.12%
Disagreed	18	19.14%
Strongly Disagreed	10	10.64%
Total	94	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2022

From the above table, 12.76% of the respondents Strongly Agree, 22.34% of respondents Agree, 35.12% of respondents are Undecided, 19.14% of respondents Disagree and 10.64% of respondents Strongly Disagree.

It can be deduced that a high amount of the respondents are Undecided about the questions as they are neither here nor there. They don't agree or disagree that SUG election in the University of Benin is influenced by the school management.

**Table 4.2.8:** Do you agree that the University is a place where future Political Leaders can develop their political careers?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly agreed	65	69.15%
Agreed	27	28.73%
Undecided	0	0%
Disagreed	1	1.06%
Strongly Disagreed	1	1.06%
Total	94	100%

Source; Field Survey, 2022

From the above table, 69.15% of respondents Strongly Agree, 28.73% of respondents Agree, 0% of respondents were Undecided, 1.06% of respondent Disagree and 1.06% of respondents strongly Disagreed.

It can be inferred that a high amount of respondent agrees to the fact that the university is a place where future political leader can develop their political careers because 69.15% of respondent Strongly Agree and 28.73% Agreed.

**Table 4.2.9:** Does Lack of Trust from student leader/politicians affects students’ participation in politics?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly agreed	39	41.49%
Agreed	45	47.87%
Undecided	4	4.26%
Disagreed	5	5.32%
Strongly disagreed	1	1.06%
Total	94	100%

Source; Field survey, 2022

From the above table, 41.49% of respondents Strongly Agree, 47.87% of respondents Agree, 4.26% of respondents were undecided, 5.32% Disagreed, and 1.06% Strongly Disagree.

It can be inferred that the respondents accept that lack of trust from student leader/politicians affects students’ participation in politics as 47.87% agree and 41.49% of respondents strongly agree.

**Table 4.2.10:** Do you think school management influence student Union election result?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly agreed	12	12.77%
Agreed	35	37.23%
Undecided	32	34.04%
Disagreed	11	11.70%
Strongly disagreed	4	4.26%
Total	94	100%

Source: field survey, 2022

From the above table, 12.77% of the respondents Strongly Agree, 37.23% of respondents Agree, 34.04% of respondents were Undecided, 11.70% of respondents Disagreed while 4.26% of respondents Strongly Disagree.

It is then safe to say that most respondents think that school management influence student Union election result as the analysis shows that a higher amount of respondents Agree with a percentage of 37.23% and also 12.77% Strongly agreed. However there were still a high number of respondents who are undecided they neither agree or disagree to the claim that school management influence student union election which amount for 34.04% of the responses.

**Table 4.2.11:** Does the influence of school management in student politics affects students participation in politics?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly agreed	26	27.66%
Agreed	34	36.17%
Undecided	28	29.79%
Disagreed	5	5.32%
Strongly disagreed	1	1.06%
Total	94	100%

Source: field survey, 2022

From the above table, 27.66% of the respondents Strongly Agree, 36.17% of respondents Agree, 29.79% of respondents were Undecided, 5.32% of respondents Disagreed while 1.06% of respondents Strongly Disagree.

It can be inferred that the respondents accept that the influence of school management in student politics affects students' participation in politics because from the table 36.17% Agree and 27.66% of respondents strongly agree.

**Table 4.2.12:** Do you think that the lack of concern from the student leaders/ politicians has led to students' political disengagement?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly agreed	43	45.74%
Agreed	31	32.98%
Undecided	7	7.45%
Disagreed	12	12.77%
Strongly Disagreed	1	1.06%
Total	94	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2022

From the above table, 45.74% of respondents Strongly Agree, 32.98% of respondents Agree, 7.45 of respondent are Undecided, 12.77% of respondents Disagreed and 1.06% of respondents strongly disagreed.

It can be inferred from the above table and analysis that most of the respondents think that the lack of concern from the student leaders/ politicians has led to students' political disengagement because of the 45.74% and 32.98% of the Strongly agree and Agree column.

**Table 4.2.13:** Do you agree that the fear of electoral violence within campus have reduce the participation of student in politics?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
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Strongly agreed	63	67.02%
Agreed	24	25.53%
Undecided	1	1.06%
Disagreed	5	5.33%
Strongly disagreed	1	1.06%
Total	94	100%

Source: field survey, 2022

From the above table, 67.02% of respondents Strongly Agree, 25.53% of respondents Agree, 1.06% of respondents are Undecided, 5.33% of respondents Disagreed and 1.06% of respondents Strongly Disagreed.

It may be deduced that a greater proportion of respondents concurred with the statement that the fear of electoral violence within campus have reduce the participation of student in politics because from the above table 67.02% strongly Agree and 25.53% of respondents Agree.

**Table 4.2.14:** Do you agree that most youths distant themselves from politics because of political blackmailing and character assassination?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly Agreed	46	48.94%
Agreed	34	36.17%
Undecided	8	8.51%
Disagreed	5	5.32%
Strongly Disagreed	1	1.06%
Total	94	100%

Source: Field survey, 2022

From the above table, 48.94% of respondents strongly Agreed, 36.17% of respondents Agreed, 8.51% of respondents are Undecided, 5.32% Disagreed and 1.06% of respondents strongly disagree.

It may be deduced that a greater proportion of respondents that accepts that youths distant themselves from politics because of Political blackmail and character assassination because from the above table 48.94% strongly Agree and 36.17% of respondents Agree.

**Table 4.2.15:** Do you agree that corruption and indiscipline displayed by both student politicians or by adult politicians have also led to student apathy?

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly agreed	63	67.03%
Agreed	25	26.59%
Undecided	3	3.19%
Disagreed	3	3.19%
Strongly disagreed	0	0%
total	94	100%

Source: field survey, 2022

From the above table, 67.03% of respondents Strongly Agree, 26.59% of respondents Agree, 3.19% of respondents are Undecided, 3.19% of respondents Disagree, and no respondents Strongly Disagree.

With this analysis, we can deduce that respondents accepted that corruption and indiscipline displayed by both students and adult politicians have led to students' apathy, as 67.03% Strongly Agree and 26.59% of respondents Agree.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The result of this study has been quite instructive, informative, and revealing, based on the data's analysis or information collected from the opinions of the respondent on Investigating Youth Political Participation and Student Union Election in Nigeria: A case study of university of Benin.

The findings from this research have shown the reason why Youth Participation can be high or low in a political setting and student union in particular. The analysis of research question one reveals that a high amount of people agrees that youth involvement in politics is vital, just like we have seen from literature that have been reviewed in the previous chapter that every societies development rest on the Involvement of the youth of that society. Hence the responds to this question of have shown that the role of youth in politics is needed and cannot be reduced. It was further find out as respondents also agreed that political sensitization can raise the awareness and importance in participating in politics. Also Respondents are of the opinion that the University is a place where future political leaders can train and develop their careers. Involvement in school politics can further build your mind on what to see on the bigger stage and also how to approach political leadership positions in the future.

Respondents were of the opinion that good representation of past student political leaders can influence future political participation as for people to be further interested in performing political activities they should be able to see positive representation from those they put in power. Also looking at our case study respondents agreed student union election in University of Benin is free and fair judging from the 2020/2021 SUG Election and the low turnout is cause by past SUG representative who did not leave up to the expectations of the voters and their lack of concern to student welfare.

The 4th, 7th, 10th ,11th research question dwelled on the school management's involvement in school politics and its effect. The respondents agreed that management involve themselves in student politics and even go to the extent of influence election result. This involvement as agreed by majority of the respondent can affect students' participation in politics because they now feel they are not able to influence who becomes their leader and or doesn't since the management choice is influenced on them.

Also, the 5th and 12th research question asked concerning the lack of concern from student politicians if it has led to students' political disengagement, and a large number of respondents agreed, which is to say the lackadaisical attitude of student political leaders to the welfare of student has led to the downward trend of student participation in politics.

Lastly Electoral violence on campus as agreed by high number of respondents has also been a factor that affect the student's political participation and even in our general society, this has negatively affected the government because this aspect of politics discouraged voters and party supporters from performing their duties and also political blackmail and character assassination is a core reason why voters and youth distant themselves from political activities.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

Involvement of youth in campus politics is a cornerstone of circular Politics because its activities prepare the minds of youth circles for the larger scene. Studies by various researchers have concluded that young people who make up the majority in every society are mostly apolitical about political activism, which increases the number of politically incompetent leaders without leadership background knowledge and makes older political leaders stay in political affairs.

Voter turnout indeed appear to be much lower among young people than among older people, but seeing this as proof of indifference ignores the structural and organizational barriers that many young people must overcome in order to participate in elections. Additionally, it fails to take into consideration the mistrust many young people harbor for established forms of government. Apathy is not the same as feeling disconnected from a process that is not thought to be a useful instrument for genuine political involvement.

Youth Participation in politics in Nigeria which starting from the days of Nnamdi Azikwe was supposed to restructure the government and build a Nation where every member participates in electing their leaders but over the years disappointing leadership from the political leaders has grown the apolitical attitude in our society in general and not just for Youth only. Therefore, from out finds in this research respondents believe that for youth participation to be increased in campus politics there must be no external influence from management bodies, student political leaders must take seriously their citizens which is the student they

represent by representing their needs and also sensitizing the student in the campus about the importance of their involvement in Political affairs both within campus and in the wider society.

## **5.1 CONCLUSION**

The increasing underrepresentation of political leaders and the engagement of external bodies in the electoral process, which allows for an election that is not free and fair, are the main causes of the decline in youth participation in politics. The decline in young involvement is also attributed to political blackmail and character assassination.

Arresting the negative trend demands immediate and strategic effort to sensitize the youth on the necessities of participating in politics and helping improve the political arena with fresh ideas. Also, political leaders should as much as possible separate the management from the youth and students affair which may lead to unequal chances in getting political offices and also build in the mind of the citizen bias judgement and become apolitical.

Also, past or future political leaders should engage in activities that are of greater good to their voters (citizens) in other to increase the number of participants in political affairs. Young people are more likely to become interested citizens and voters if they get involved in politics in their community early on. Politics is thus one of the strongest vehicles for fostering greater "young" citizenship.

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATION

The following advice on tactical and strategic initiatives required to increase young participation in politics in Nigeria is provided in light of the research's findings. All facets of society must be represented for political systems to be considered representational. When young people are excluded from political participation or disenfranchised, a sizeable sector of the population has little to no voice or influence in choices that have an impact on the lives of group members. The destruction of the representativeness of political systems is a major effect.

Young people must participate in formal political processes and have a voice in shaping today's and tomorrow's politics in order to have an impact over the long run. In addition to being a fundamental democratic and political right, inclusive political involvement is also essential for creating societies that are stable and peaceful and for creating policies that are tailored to the particular requirements of younger generations. Young people must be aware of their rights and be provided the information and tools necessary to engage meaningfully at all levels in political institutions, processes, and decision-making, and elections in particular.

There is a need to examine the Nigerian society that breeds and supports the corrupt behavior of politicians who has in all sense neglected the reason he was elected, which is representing the interest of the voters, rather than the selfish interest which has led to political apathy.

The research work also dwelled on how externals like management as influence school elections either in favour or against candidates aspiring for political offices. This research recommends that influencing electoral results and

who they want should be the sole right of the voters and no management should because of any reason deny them of this right.

There is a need to review the fact that youth should hold a vital part in the make-up of government decisions and policies. Political sensitization should be carried out in communities and localities in other to increase the political participation of youths. The research came to a compromise and started that youth involvement in politics is a key factor in improving the political arena of any nation.

Elections conducted during local politics should also be given serious attention as it also has its influence on future political activities. If an election is Free and Fair it has a positive influence over future electoral activities and vice versa.

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## QUESTIONNAIRE

**INSTRUCTION:** please tick [x] the appropriate box.

### Demographic Data

1. SEX : Male [  ] Female [  ]
2. Age:  $\leq 20$  [  ] 21 – 25 [  ] 26 – 30 [  ]  $31 \geq$  [  ]
3. Marital Status: Single [  ] Married [  ] Divorced [  ] Widowed [  ]
4. Education Qualification: SSCE [  ] NCE/OND [  ]
5. Religion: Christianity [  ] Islam [  ] African Traditional Religion (ATR) [  ] Others [  ]

### Research Question

6. Do you agree that youth involvement in politics is vital because they are important part of the society? Strongly Agree [  ] Agree [  ] indifference [  ] Disagree [  ] Strongly disagree [  ]
7. Do you think that political sensitization can build the political participation of students and youth in general? Strongly Agree [  ] Agree [  ] indifference [  ] Disagree [  ] Strongly disagree [  ]
8. Can good representation of past and present student leaders/politician influence future students' political participation? Strongly Agree [  ] Agree [  ] indifference [  ] Disagree [  ] Strongly disagree [  ]
9. Do you agree that the absence of School Management influence in student politics will improve the participation of student in politics? Strongly Agree [  ] Agree [  ] indifference [  ] Disagree [  ] Strongly disagree [  ]
10. Do you think the University of Benin SUG elections always have a low turnout of voters because of the lack of interest of voters influenced by lack

- of concern to student welfare by Student politicians/leaders? Strongly Agree [ ] Agree [ ] indifference [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ]
11. Do you think that Student Union Election in the University of Benin is Free and Fair, Judging from the 2020/2021 SUG election? Strongly Agree [ ] Agree [ ] indifference [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ]
  12. Do you Think SUG election in the University of Benin is influenced by the school management? Strongly Agree [ ] Agree [ ] indifference [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ]
  13. Do you agree that the University is a place where future political leaders can develop their political careers? Strongly Agree [ ] Agree [ ] indifference [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ]
  14. Does Lack of Trust from student leader/politicians affects students participation in politics? Strongly Agree [ ] Agree [ ] indifference [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ]
  15. Do you think school management influence student Union election result? Strongly Agree [ ] Agree [ ] indifference [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ]
  16. Does the influence of school management in student politics affects student participation in politics? Strongly Agree [ ] Agree [ ] indifference [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ]
  17. Do you think that the lack of concern from the student leaders/ politicians has led to students' political disengagement? Strongly Agree [ ] Agree [ ] indifference [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ]
  18. Do you agree that the fear of electoral violence within campus have reduce the participation of student in politics? Strongly Agree [ ] Agree [ ] indifference [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly disagree [ ]

19. Do you agree that most youths distance themselves from politics because of Political blackmailing and character assassination? Strongly Agree [  ] Agree [  ] indifference [  ] Disagree [  ] Strongly disagree [  ]
20. Do you agree that corruption and indiscipline displayed by student politicians and adult politicians have led to student political apathy? Strongly Agree [  ] Agree [  ] indifference [  ] Disagree [  ] Strongly disagree [  ]