
INFLUENCE OF EDUCATION ON POLITICAL
ATTITUDE OF YOUTHS IN ONDO STATE

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of education on political attitude of youths in Ondo State, Nigeria. The study specifically examined political attitude of youths in Ondo State; the difference in the political attitude of youths based on their educational status in Ondo State; and how education predicted youths' political attitude in Ondo State. The descriptive research design of the survey type was used in this study. The sample for the study consisted of 200 youths from 2 Local Government Areas in Ondo State. The sample was selected using multistage sampling procedure. A self-designed research instrument tagged Education and Youths' Political Attitude Questionnaire (EYPAQ) was used to collect relevant data for the study. The data collected through the instrument were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics of t-test and linear regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that youths are not encouraged to participate in democratic processes except

when they are financially induced. Also, youths' political attitude differs based on their educational status. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that policy maker should update the existing political education content in the curriculum of secondary schools and tertiary institutions so as to broaden the youths' knowledge of political processes and participation.

Keywords: Education, Political Attitude, Youth, Educational Status

Introduction

The youths as revealed by Adeyi (2011), constitute about 40 percent of the more than 160 million people of Nigeria. Sociologically, youth is defined as the transition state between childhood and adulthood and World Health Organisation (W.H.O) declares people of age between 15 and 35 years as youth. By this definition, youth represents the time of life when a person is young and vulnerable, prior to adulthood. The youth are expected to be integral part of any nation and to play very supportive role in a country's political, economic and social life. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, it appears that the youth are spotted in bad light, associated with crimes and all forms of social maladies. The political realm is no exception to this prevailing mindset about the youth class given the fact that misconception about politics is phenomenal and has pervasively inculcated a parochial political culture.

In Nigeria as in most democratic nations, government is usually entrenched through ballot; hence youths who are of voting age have the right to cast their vote to elect their representative during an election. Many citizens, governments, and representatives of the international community often consider young people as part of the problem and not as part of the solution, particularly in countries that are faced with conflict. In most of these societies, youth are downgraded and have little voice in the political developments. Too often, government and elected officials do not involve young citizens. When young people do try to direct their political wishes, government officials often neglect their

concerns (Kofi and Ibanga, 2018). The separation of youth and the perception of non-inclusion seem to affect their political attitude.

Oyetade (2003) described attitude as how we think, feel about and act towards our fellow human beings and how they think, feel about and act towards us. Attitude to civic and political issues refers to the expression of individual feelings, expression or predisposition toward civic and political matters. The decision of the youths to participate or not to participate depends on their awareness, adherence and internationalization of these democratic values and this has serious consequences on democracy and the general polity. Ayaro (2001) defined democratic values as the fundamental beliefs and constitutional principles which guide the democratic values or as the fundamental belief and constitutional principles which guide the democratic government put in place in a particular society.

Ojobo (2011) advanced that lack of development of democratic attitude (values) is one major obstacle that has mar democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Thus it is the obstacle to youth positive participation in our democracy that both the elites and youths have surprisingly shown weak commitment to basic symbols and values of democracy. Hence, there is serious manifestation of greed, inordinate ambition to win power, thuggery, dishonesty, personalization of political/public offices, insincerity, disrespects for others, intolerance etc. in our national polity.

It is observed that some of the youths have negative attitude towards political processes. Incidents of electoral violence such as abduction and kidnapping, murder, protests, corruption, intimidation and physical attack as well as poster defacing in the previous elections in Nigeria appears to be as a result of youths' negative political attitude. Antonis (2017) observed that all the electoral violence could be linked to the youths who don't have the right political attitude. The youths as a result of their negative political attitude seems to be ready-made weapons in the hands of the political leaders who think less of the development of the state but more of their parochial interest.

The researcher also observed that, the political culture in Nigeria seem to be characterized by intolerance, intimidation, thuggery, assassination, bitterness, apathy, indolence, money and ethnic pluralism. It appears that the ill-feelings about politics have maximally promoted the view that politics is nothing but bitter struggles that precipitate in elections violence. This valued judgment about politics seems to have eroded and made blurry the inevitability and desirability of politics in human existence. The scenarios of deception, use of force and violence masterminded by political elite class prior to, during and after elections have rendered politics as “a- do- or die affair”, thereby affecting the political attitude of youths. However, the observed deterioration in youths’ political attitude appears to be a reflection of education.

Education is a means of transmitting the knowledge and the values of every society. It entails the inculcation of fundamental values and beliefs of society to the young. Through public education, states seek to influence young people before their moral character is fully formed. Education has been identified as a variable tool for national development, and as such, no nation could rise above the level of education of her citizenry. Ojobo (2011) opined that education gives individuals the self-confidence needed to engage in discussions on issues that could afford people the information required to make informed judgment. It is widely known and accepted that education is recognized all over the world as the cornerstone of any structure for sustainable development of any nation (Olaifa, 2018). Dibia and Micheal (2015) explained education as the entire process of the development of an independent and integrated personality which encompasses training and acquisition of special skills, knowledge, attitudes and values needed by every individual to be responsible and which would eventually enabled him or her to contribute his or her own quota to the growth and peace of the society where he or she lives.

Educated youths seem to be more aware of the impact of government on their lives and pay more attention to politics by having the right political attitude. They also appear to have more information about political processes and participate in a wider range of political activities. The political education that the pupils

and students would receive could deepen their political culture and socialization processes. Political education could produce informed electorate who is aware of those things to consider when exercising his voting right. The research, therefore, determined the influence of education on political attitude of youths in Ondo State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of education on political attitude of youths in Ondo State. Specifically, the study examined:

1. the political attitude of youths in Ondo State;
2. the difference in the political attitude of youths based on their educational status in Ondo State; and
3. how education predicted youths' political attitude in Ondo State.

Research Question

The following research question was raised for this study

1. What are the political attitudes exhibited by youths in Ondo State?

Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses are raised for this study

- Ho1: There is no significant difference in the political attitude of youths based on their educational status in Ondo State
- Ho 2: Education will not significantly predict youths' political attitude in Ondo State

Methodology

The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted in the study. Descriptive research was considered appropriate because, it focuses on the observation and perception of the existing situation, describes and interprets what is concerned with issues, conditions, practice or relationship that exist; views, belief and attitude that are held, processes that are going on and trends that are developing. A survey research studies a small sample from a

large population from where inferences would be drawn about the characteristics of the defined population. Therefore, the survey research provides conceptual and methodological design for investigating the problem of the study. The population of this study consisted of all youths in Ondo State who are between the age of 18 and 29 years old.

The sample for the study consisted of 200 youths from 2 Local Government Areas in Ondo State. The sample was selected using multistage sampling procedure. In stage one, one senatorial district was selected from the three senatorial districts in Ondo State through simple random sampling technique. In stage two, two local government areas were selected from the senatorial district using simple random sampling technique. In stage three, 100 youths were selected from Churches, Mosques and football viewing centers in each of the Local Government Areas through purposive sampling technique. An instrument titled "Education and Youths' Political Attitude Questionnaire (EYPAQ)" was used to collect relevant data for this study. The EYPAQ consisted of two sections namely A and B. Section A sought information on demographic data of the respondents which include gender and educational status. Section B consisted of 20 items which sought for information on political attitude of youths and role of education. A four-point rating scale response options provided for the respondents to choose from are:

Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD). The face and content validity were ascertained by giving the designed questionnaire to experts of Tests and Measurement and Social Studies for vetting before distributing it to the respondents. To ensure face validity of the instrument, the experts helped to determine the face value of the appropriateness of the instrument. To ensure content validity, the experts checked the items and ascertain that the items represent the factors specified in the research questions. In so doing, all irrelevances and ambiguous items were eliminated. The reliability of the instrument was determined by finding the internal consistency of the instrument. In doing this, a pilot study was carried out outside the sampled locations. The instrument was administered on 20 respondents. In order to ascertain reliability of the instrument, data

collected were tested using Cronbach's alpha which yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.82. The researcher personally administered the instrument with the help of a trained research assistant. This made it possible for the researcher to explain and interpret some items of the questionnaire to the respondents. The researcher's personal contact and visit to the respondents helped in ensuring better understanding of the items of the questionnaire and also eased retrieval of the questionnaire. The data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The research question was answered using frequency count, mean, and standard deviation. Hypothesis 1 was tested using t-test while hypothesis 2 was tested using linear regression Analysis. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the political attitudes exhibited by youths in Ondo State?

Table 1: Descriptive analysis showing political attitudes exhibited by youths

S/N	ITEMS	N	Mean	Stan Dev.	Decision
1.	I cannot vote for politicians in Nigeria because they do not worth the efforts	200	2.83	1.02	Accepted
2.	Voting in Nigeria political system is a waste of time	200	2.42	1.08	Rejected
3.	My aspiring for political office is a waste of time	200	3.45	0.97	Accepted
4.	I don't care about whoever that govern us	200	2.99	0.99	Accepted
5.	The time require of me to participate in processes of selecting a leader is enormous	200	2.96	1.21	Accepted
6.	I like to participate in recruiting leaders through democratic process	200	2.48	1.13	Rejected
7.	Luring people to vote with money portend the electorate as a fraudster	200	2.35	1.15	Rejected
8.	I vote as many times as possible because of the financial benefit	200	3.52	0.87	Accepted
9.	No matter qualities a candidate possessed without subscribing to my faith is no quality	200	2.42	1.07	Rejected
10.	I participate in acts of electoral violence because of money	200	2.93	0.55	Accepted
			28.35		

Mean Cut-off: 2.50

Table 1 revealed the political attitudes exhibited by youths in Ondo State. Based on the mean cut-off of 2.50, 6 items out of the 10 items were accepted. The youths accepted that voting for politicians in Nigeria do not worth the efforts; aspiring for political office was a

waste of time; they don't care about whoever that govern us; the time required to participate in processes of selecting a leader was enormous; they vote as many times as possible because of the financial benefit attached to voting; and they participate in acts of electoral violence because of money. It can be summarized from the table that youths are not encouraged to participate in democratic processes except when they are financially induced.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the political attitude of youths based on their educational status in Ondo State.

Table 2: t-test analysis for political attitude of youths based on their educational status in Ondo State

Variations	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-tab
Above Secondary Education	118	29.15	2.29	198	7.042*	1.96
Secondary Education and below	82	27.20	1.25			

*P < 0.05

Table 2 shows that the t-cal value of 7.042 is greater than t-tab value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significant, this implies that the null hypothesis is rejected at $\alpha = 0.05$. Hence, there is significant difference in the political attitude of youths based on their educational status in Ondo State. The mean score shows a mean difference of 1.95 in favour of youth whose educational status is above secondary education.

Hypothesis 2: Education will not significantly predict youths' political attitude in Ondo State

Table 3: Simple regression analysis between education and youths' political attitude

Variables	Unstandardized		Stand.	t-	Stat.	R	R ²	F-cal
	(B)	Std Error	Coeffi- cients					
Constant	7.707	1.185	6.502	0.779	0.607	305.199	0.000	
Education	.724	.041	.779	17.470				

In table 3, the calculated F-cal value of 305.199 is significant because the p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ level of significance, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. It implies that education will significantly predict youths' political attitude in Ondo State. The result of the analysis shown in Table 3 indicated the predictor accounted for 60.7% in youths' political attitude ($R^2 = 0.607$). It contributed 77.9% to the criterion variable in predicting youths' political attitude.

The regression equation derivable from table 3 is $Y = 7.707 + 0.724X$

where:

Y = Youths' Political Attitude

X = Education

Discussion

The study revealed that youths are not encouraged to participate in democratic processes except when they are financially induced. Some of the reason for such attitudes can be supported with Ojobo (2011) who advanced that lack of development of democratic attitude (values) is one major obstacle that has mar democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Thus it is the obstacle to youth positive participation in our democracy.

Youths have been involved in the evolution of democracy and advocacy of good governance in Nigeria but Aghayere (2007) asserted that corruption among leaders have led to lack of popular

participation, and disengagement of many Nigerians, particularly youths, from political processes. The level of corruption in the country has made youths mortgage their conscience after induced with meager amount of money or materials like face-caps, T-shirts, umbrellas among others to support the wrong candidates.

The study also revealed that there was a significant difference in the political attitude of youths based on their educational status in Ondo State. The mean score shows a mean difference of 1.95 in favour of youth whose educational status is above secondary education. This implies that youth whose educational status is above average exhibited positive attitude towards political issue than youths whose educational status is secondary education and below. This finding was supported by Olasupo (2015) who concluded that youths who are well educated exhibited the right political attitude than those who are less educated.

The study further revealed that education will significantly predict youths' political attitude in Ondo State. Education which is the predictor of youths' political attitude accounted for 60.7% while it contributed 77.9% to the criterion variable in predicting youths' political attitude. This finding is supported with the conclusion of Ojobo (2011) who concluded that education gives individuals the self-confidence needed to engage in discussions on issues that could afford people the information required to make informed judgment on voting and politics. The finding is supported by the claim of Kofi and Ibanga (2018) who concluded that education is an important factor influencing political attitude among the youths. Most youths who lack adequate education are not exposed to political education hence have developed the habit of voting apathy. They do this because of the fact that the youths do not know their rights and responsibilities as citizens in the nation. Most of the youths' political attitude is as a result of inadequate education which affects their attitude towards political processes.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that youths are not encouraged to participate in democratic processes except when they are financially induced. Also, youths' political attitude

differs based on their educational status while education predicted youths' political attitude to a large extent.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Policy maker should update the existing political education content in the curriculum of secondary schools and tertiary institutions so as to broaden the youths' knowledge of political processes and participation.
2. Seminars, public awareness and workshop should be organized by appropriate agencies since some youths have missed the opportunity of being educated or attending any school. This should go a long way to reduce the acts of incivility constituted by uneducated youths.
3. Values such as transparency, due process, your vote must count, and one – man – vote are currently gaining access into Nigeria core values. These values need to as a matter of urgency be inculcated into Social Studies curriculum so that the youths will have right political attitude.

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