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Education of Youths for Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria: The Way Forward

Anthony Great Ossai

Department of Arts and Social Sciences education,

Faculty of Education,

University of Delta, Agbor,

321102, Delta State, Nigeria

Email: anthony.ossai@unidel.edu.ng

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ABSTRACT

The framework of the proposed study is sustainable democracy, which is possible with the participation of the “people,” particularly the youth. Young people have the energy, potential, and ability to take risks. When young people participate actively in governance, it leads to good governance. Youths who do not obtain the education required to develop active participation in democratic life are more prone to losing interest in politics. This is in accordance with John Dewey’s view that education is an important component of democracy. As a consequence, it is vital to provide young people with much needed education for active citizenship participation. The research investigated how educational programmes and activities may be utilised to educate Nigerian youth for active participation and the long-term viability of democracy. The descriptive survey research approach was applied. Two research topics and two hypotheses were proposed for the study. 236 students were chosen at random from a population of 1,200 at Delta State University Abraka (Agbor Undergraduate Students). The “Education and Sustainable Democratic Questionnaire (ESDQ)” was used to survey the respondents. The mean score was used to answer the researcher’s questions, and the hypotheses were tested using a Z-test with a significance threshold of 0.05. Both assumptions were shown to be wrong. The data revealed a significant relationship between education and democracy. As a consequence, policymakers were recommended to include in the school curriculum appropriate initiatives that would support and preserve democracy in Nigeria.

Keywords: Education; Democracy; Youth; Sustainability; Participation.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainability and democracy are inextricably linked. The transition to sustainability requires democratic mechanisms that are both long-term and adaptive. There are no definite answers; instead, ongoing research and implementation of new policy concepts are

required. The emphasis of the “Democracy and Sustainability” topic is on studying how shifts toward sustainability occur and how they may be influenced democratically (Mensah, 2019). Sustainable democracy is a challenge with unique characteristics. It is global in nature and involves complex interactions among economic, political, institutional, social, and technological processes transcending national boundaries.

The global community has been struggling with the issue of how to effectively and accurately respond to the threat of unsustainable development for several decades. For instance, the relationship between human beings and the environment is a vital issue across the world in present times. The last few decades have raised the spectre of environmental disaster on a scale previous generations of scientists could barely have imagined. The entire world is bombarded with climate change, global warming, social malfunctioning, economic instability, and so on. In this traumatic situation, there is a ray of hope, and that is the youth. Empowerment is at the heart of this aforementioned paradigm shift and attempt to re-conceptualize. It concerns development strategies aimed at poverty alleviation too. Youth constitute an important fraction of society. It is difficult to imagine a holistic life without youthful vigor, energy, enthusiasm, and a bubbling joy of life. Youths constitute a large percentage of the Nigerian population, but despite their decisive role in nation building, it is often observed that the country has not invested seriously in them, thereby making them an army involved in unprofitable activities. The youth form the engine room of the labour force, the channel of change, and represent the future of any nation (Vasava, 2018). A vision of a prosperous, peaceful, and technologically advanced society is therefore unrealisable in an environment where youth need to be shaped, properly groomed, and positioned. This is because the energy, skills, and aspirations of youth are invaluable assets that no country can afford to squander. However, the youth in Nigeria have been ignored by various administrations and segments of society.

Globally and nationally, there is a realisation that the involvement and empowerment of youths is the key to achieving growth and development, and therefore, there is a need to discuss how development actors can engage with youth and translate priority areas into development programming and policies. What are some of the persistent challenges and positive experiences and lessons that can be learned from countries that have empowered and engaged youth in finding sustainable development solutions? Should we be pursuing a sectoral approach to addressing youth exclusion or investing more in a cross-cutting and capacity-development approach so that youths are equipped with the technical skills and leadership qualities to respond effectively to the development challenges in their communities?

Nigeria is the most populous Black Country in the world, with a population of over 200 million people and an annual population growth rate of 2.61 percent. Currently, about 33.6 million Nigerians (16.8 percent) are classified as “youths” (aged 15 to 35) (Farquharson, 2019). However, according to Edet et al., (2022), around 43.69 percent of Nigeria’s entire population were between the ages of 0 and 14 in 2019. As children develop into young people, the youth will progressively make up the majority of the country’s population in the near future. While there is a natural increase in the number of young people in Nigeria, there is no natural increase in the number of possibilities for them. Indeed, Akinboyo (2020) avers that unemployment, insufficient technical and vocational skills, restricted engagement in social and political space, and a lack of capital for projects and companies are some of the distressing issues confronting young Nigerians. Nigeria’s youth unemployment crisis, the country’s bad infrastructure, rising inflation, and a

political system that cannot guarantee justice and inclusion all point to a dark future for millions of angry, disillusioned young people.

The above argument is supported by the general election of 2019, which saw widespread incidences of political violence and ethnic-related agitation by youths across the country before the elections. These actions endanger the country's democracy and must be addressed if the country is to survive and reap the benefits of true democracy. According to Henn & Foard (2014), young people lose interest in politics when they do not receive the right education that encourages active involvement in democratic life. Thus, adequate education is the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes for active citizenship and respect for everyone's human rights. This study examined whether youth education can prepare Nigerians for long-term democracy. This research's purpose is thus; (1) to determine how educational policies and implementation programmes in Nigeria influence youth active participation in long-term democracy; (2) to determine the impact of youths on the longterm viability of Nigerian democracy; and (3) to identify strategies for promoting the type of democracy that Nigeria requires.

DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION

The term 'democracy', derived from the Greek words 'demos' and "kratos", which literally means 'rule by the people', "has been defined and interpreted in various ways by different thinkers in different times (Purcell, 2016). Only when a government is chosen and elected by the people, responsible and accountable to the people for its policies, decisions, and actions, can it be described as a democratic government. Variations in emphasis on the modes of governance; participation of people in ruling themselves; responsiveness; and accountability of the government to the people are reflected in different definitions of "democracy".

Dahl (2020) uses the term "democracy" in three basic contemporary senses: (1) a form of government in which the right to make political decisions is exercised directly by the whole body of citizens, acting under procedures of majority rule, known as direct democracy; (2) a form of government in which citizens exercise the same right not in person but through the representatives chosen by and responsible for them; and (3) a form of government in which this is known as representative democracy; and (4) a form of government, usually a representative democracy, in which the powers of the majority are exercised within a framework of constitutional restraints designed to guarantee all citizens the enjoyment of certain individual or collective rights, such as freedom of speech and religion, known as liberal, or constitutional, democracy.

According to Arneson (2009), democracy means "government by the people"; a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system; it is a state of society characterised by formal equality of rights and privileges. Wilson (2009) considers the best brief definition of democracy as that given by Abraham Lincoln: "government of the people, by the people, for the people." According to Schmitter and Karl (1991), the broad definition of democracy is that democracy is a system of government in which all adults within the unit of rule are entitled to participate equally in making general laws and policy. Each of the elements within this and most other definitions will require further specification. In the course of such elaboration, most theories go beyond description and definition to some statement of democratic ideals. According to Brennan (2017), democracy is a system of government in which the people rule. Modern democracy differs

from ancient democracy in aiming to enable people to govern themselves through several forms of autonomy: collective, plural, and individual. Ancient democracy gave almost exclusive emphasis to collective authority and did not recognise universal human rights.

The term “education” originates from the Latin word “educare”, meaning “to lead forth” (Kumar, 2016). Education (ed-u-kat-of-educare), in the literal sense, is to bring up, to teach, to train, and to develop the intellectual and moral powers. John Dewey speaks of it as the development of all those possibilities in the individual which will enable him to control his environment and fulfil his possibilities (Dewey, 2021). Mahatma Gandhi writes, “By education, I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in children and men—body, mind, and spirit” (Gandhi, 2021, p. 53). The modern tendency is to regard education as a process, bi-polar in nature, the poles being the educator and the educand. In this process, the personality of the educator acts on that of the educand in order to modify the latter’s development. Dewey believed education was a process, and this process had a psychological as well as a sociological aspect (Swan, *et al.*, 2009). Education involves the interplay of educational and social forces. The individual always tries to modify the personality of an individual according to the needs and demands of society. Dewey laid more stress on the sociological side of this process. The child is to live in the community to which he belongs. Hence, true education comes through the stimulation of the child’s senses by the demands of the social situation in which he finds himself. Considering this and the bi-polar process together, this work can safely assume education as a process involving a tri-polar nature, as it involves the interplay of the educator, the educator, and the social forces. The educator tries to modify the personality of the educator in light of the needs and demands of the society to which the letter belongs.

These interpretations lead to a two-fold meaning of the word education—the wider and the narrower. In its wider sense, the term “education” may be held to include the whole process of development through which a human being passes from infancy to maturity to complete living. In this sense, education is life and life is education. In its narrower sense, the term “education” is equal to only a few specific influences that have a bearing on the development of the child. A community plans these influences for the benefit of the younger generation. It is limited to the community’s job of passing on its traditions, background, knowledge, and attitudes to the next generation through specialised people, tools, and methods. Education is critical for the transmission of cultural knowledge and the formation of attitudes toward a nation’s long-term democracy. Young adults must comprehend how democracy works and how they might contribute to its preservation and improvement.

The struggle for democracy can be traced back to antiquity. The ancient Aryan rishis, prophets, Greek philosophers, Roman legal and administrative talents, great religious leaders of the world and innumerable martyrs through the ages have struggled in defence of freedom and justice. The heritage of democracy has also been recorded and preserved in the great spiritual and legal documents; in the Vedic scriptures; in the Ten Commandments; in the Magna Carta; in the Bill of Rights; in the French Declaration of Rights of Man; in the American Declaration of Independence; in the federal Constitution; in the Gettysburg Address; in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and in the Indian Constitution. And then the industrial revolution, Marxism, socialism, and many other occurrences and ideas not only strengthened democratic trends but also enriched and widened the dimensions of democracy. While democracy has undergone kaleidoscopic changes, the core of the matter remains, as it is a struggle of man for freedom, equality, and

fraternity. A human being has rightly been characterised as a social animal. It is because of the primacy of politics that Aristotle considers a human being to be, by nature, a political animal. On the basis of this assertion, it can be said that politics can be minimised and restricted but cannot be eliminated altogether, and that's what makes democracy necessary to ensure civility in public life. That is why some political analysts say democracy is the best form of government among all the known forms of government.

The age of enlightenment, with its emphasis on the individual capacity for reason, provides the essential framework of modern democracy. The Enlightenment brought various changes among the masses, including the one that people started using rational thinking over the blind following of authority; this perhaps was basic to the democratic system of governance. Democracy, as a system of governance, has faith in the dignity and worth of every single individual as a human being and provides space for all. The purpose of education in a democracy is to develop all aspects of the personality of an individual. Education for citizenship in a democracy is an initiation of the student into the many-sided art of living in a society. Individuals need to learn to live together in harmony with each other. 'Learning to live together' requires the development of citizenship education. This, along with gender equity, has been a growing concern in nearly all education systems around the world. This type of education is based on acquiring knowledge, shaping attitudes, and developing appropriate values. This process requires much time and attention. According to the UNESCO (2015) report submitted by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century, education for the twenty-first century is dependent on four pillars, i.e., learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live with others. Among these four pillars, the first three are essential for the holistic development of people, society, community, and nation. The last and the fourth pillar, i.e., 'learning to live together', is of a different nature, which unites the world together. It relates to the development of a feeling of oneness among the inhabitants of this world. It will further result in the unity of the state. Thus, there is a strong link between education and democracy.

Education is useful in helping the populace live together. Learning to live together means the development of an understanding of other people, respect for differences and peace. It focuses on the development of an appreciation of the growing interdependence of individuals, communities, and nations. It can be accomplished only through activities like cooperative projects and conflict resolution through peaceful mechanisms. Even though the human being has been described as a social animal, living together does not appear so natural and peaceful. At many points in our lives, we have witnessed violence in the form of riots and conflicts. The aim of education for future citizenship in a democracy is to establish in each successive generation an understanding of the values on which democracy is based. A democracy can be a success only when its citizens are fully aware of the rights available to them and the responsibilities that they are expected to perform. Education for citizenship in a democracy goes beyond the propagation of mere knowledge. Presently, we reside in an age of unprecedented violence and increasing crime everywhere, i.e., local, national, and global scenario. It is a huge shame for a country that is known worldwide for the Gandhian tradition of Ahimsa. The real object of education is to train the next generation to discharge the responsibility of citizenship properly, with the remaining objectives being derivative.

John Dewey (1946) said, "The devotion of democracy to education is a familiar fact." Democracy has always found education as its greatest support and constant company. Without education, democracy is lame, lifeless, and limp; without democracy, education is

dry, dreary (monotonous), and dead. Therefore, Dewey (1946) has remarked, “The relation between democracy and education is a reciprocal one and vitally so.” Democracy is itself an educational principle, an educational measure and a polity. Dewey believes that democracy and education bear a reciprocal relationship. Democracy cannot endure or develop without the right perspective of education, and education is inappropriate without a correct understanding of education. If we accept John Dewey’s definition of education that “Education is Life” (1963; *Democracy and Education*), then we can surely say that every moment of our life gives us education in some form or the other. The school, as an educational agency, is concerned with the preservation, transmission, and advancement of experiences from one generation to the next in order to connect the past, present, and future. According to John Dewey, a learning institution such as a school is a unique place where a certain quality of life and certain types of activities are purposely encouraged with the object of securing a child’s development along sought-after paths. In a democracy, these desirable lines refer to the promotion of the qualities of citizenship. Hopkins (1941) puts forward the following beliefs as the basis of a democratic way of life:

1. That each individual is valuable as a human being. This means belief in the indispensable dignity of man and faith in the potentialities of the individual man.
2. That everyone has the ability to learn how to act on their thoughts and that every being is capable of managing his or her life with others.
3. That an individual must follow the majority’s decisions and contribute to their development, and that government is based on popular consent.
4. That the control and direction of democratic action lie within the situation, not outside it.
5. That the process of living is interactive and that each individual works with every other individual by sharing and evaluating individual experiences towards commonly acknowledged ends.

Education has always been used as a process, as a powerful instrument for effective and desirable social change. Of course, according to many sociologists, education is not only a process but also a product. These sociologists mean to say that education usually and invariably results from social interactions and social changes. It also implies that education is the means through which democracy establishes social justice. Democracy is described as an “experiment in living”, and education is not merely a preparation for living, but it is living itself. If we want children to learn to live democratically, we must see that our homes as well as our schools are laboratories for that kind of living. In planning the life of our schools and in organising the programmes and practises thereof, these objectives must be given due consideration. Both the individual and social aspects of personality should be integrated and harmonized. That is to say, the pupil must develop his personality to the best of his capacity.

Education is at the heart of national stability and security, as well as a tool for political and economic growth and development in any democratic society (Abdullahi, 2007). This is due to the fact that schools play a critical part in this process because they provide structured and formal educational programs. As a result, in order to be regarded as democratic institutions, in order for a society to function properly, it must have a popularly controlled environment, inclusion, adequate information and awareness of others’ perspectives, and decision-making transparency. Despite popular acceptance, Nigerian democracy is still in its early stages of development. Because of the cultural

richness of the Nigerian population, the country's political landscape has faced unique socio-cultural issues, with nepotism, ethnicity, tribalism, and corruption rearing their ugly heads in a country with over 350 ethnic groups. These feelings have been passed down through the years, and young people have been readily led into violence as a result of suspicions about other tribes who have been stripped by political and religious officials. As a result, the country is constantly threatened by ethnic and religious confrontations, unemployed youth instability, youth protests, and militancy activities such as oil pipeline explosions, terrorist attacks, and so on.

In order to enhance development efforts in the country, it is necessary to equip these adolescents with a change of attitude, action, and involvement in democratic activities through the acquisition of relevant education and skills. This entails not only imparting facts, legislation, and regulations to our youth, but also influencing the required abilities to promote and apply them, maintain these ideals and attitudes in everyday life. Indeed, Eduardo and Yeaji (2015) found that increasing educational attainment improves democracy in a study that used an extended data set on educational attainment that covered much of the postwar era. The study also suggests that education has a stronger democratising effect in third-world countries.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRACY

The world currently has a population of almost two billion people between the ages of ten and 24 years (Sun, et al., 2022). More than 70 percent of Nigeria's population is below the age of 35 years (Ikuemonisan, et al. 2022). Given the large number of youths in Nigeria and across the world, the discussion on participation, local governance, and sustainable development requires an understanding of the current and potential role of youth in this context. The role of youth has always been present and has been recognised in any development discourse. The youth are not the future citizens of the democratic system; rather, they are active stakeholders in shaping democracy at a given moment. Their active participation would lead to the fulfilment of their dreams and contribute to the development of society. The youth are harbingers of any change, which is very relevant in democratic transition and consolidation (Gao, 2012). The youth can play an active role in matters of local and developmental activities, being the backbone of any nation, particularly in a growing and democratically evolving nation like Nigeria. The term "youth" is defined differently by different countries and agencies and in different contexts. Most United Nations entities, including the General Assembly, define "youth" as the population segment between 15 and 24 years of age (UNDP, 2013). The minimum age for voting in Nigeria is 18 years. Hence, "youth" is defined in this study as Nigerian citizens between the ages of 18 and 35 years.

In many countries, like India and Bangladesh, young people have been successful in gaining independence through widespread student participation (Gao, 2012). Protests and demands for democracy organised during the Arab Spring and in Hong Kong are other recent examples of youth power. Despite the existence of resources and laws intended for the common man in Nigeria, there has been very limited access to and real benefit from the same. In this scenario, the educated young are more likely to make governance effective in Nigeria if they are well educated. They would be more capable of and responsible for better quality of development, and they would be a key tool to help overcome the challenges present in Nigeria. Participation is an activity whereby ordinary citizens take part in the decision-making process affecting their well-being. Participation is a key concept in

development literature and practise (Cornwall, 2010). Participation is a key instrument for improving anything, and especially for good governance to ensure the development of people. Participation strengthens democracy. Citizen participation is closely linked to democracy (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009). When people participate in their own development, they try to improve the quality and standards of the outcome, as they themselves are the beneficiaries. Participation not only improves quality at a lower cost but also ensures transparency and accountability of stakeholders. Participation has been broadly classified into two categories, namely: civic participation and political participation. Civic participation means actively engaging in the public sphere, i.e., community or society, which includes building community infrastructure; disaster relief; volunteering for charitable causes; working for environmental protection; protesting and demanding better facilities; and many others. People want to have their say in the development process. It's important for young people to get involved so they can have more chances to improve themselves and help the state grow.

According to Birch (2007), political participation requires involvement in the process of government, which not only includes the election and voting process but also active engagement in the way policies are framed and then put into action. Furthermore, this participation must be from people in large numbers for it to be truly effective. Political participation thus focuses on political processes like voting, contesting elections, campaigns, mobilisation of resources for political parties, political protests, advocating with government officials and many others. Since both civic and political engagement are important in a society, young people can take an active role in local development. Of the 1.16 billion young people in the world, 1.06 billion belong to the less developed regions. In many developing countries, people below the age of 25 years account for more than half of the total population (UNDP, 2013). This shows the importance of youth and the need for their active participation in ensuring good governance, leading to better development. Thus, youth participation is an important issue for international development (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). Several factors influence youth participation in political and civic affairs, including socioeconomic status (SES), education, gender, caste, ethnicity, access to technology and information, and others. The nature of youth participation is shaped by institutions such as families, schools, religious institutions, political parties, and civil society organizations. The strength of the youth and the importance of youth participation in political processes has been recognised by international communities, including the UN Resolution of 1995 that called for “full and effective participation of the youth in the life of society and in decision-making.”

In the current global scenario, there is a combination of youth participation and support from international agencies for strengthening good governance for delivering development. On the one hand, international organisations provide resources and skills to governments and political leaders in order to help people realise their dreams. Considering the challenges of restlessness, frustration from delayed responses, and social inequality among the youth, it is essential to explore a model for enhancing political as well as civic participation for them. Individual, group, and community problems can be identified by youth through participation. Participation is a fundamental right (UNDP, 2013). Every citizen should participate in the governance process. Higher participation of people benefits all by cultivating democratic virtues, building individual capacities, giving equal protection of interests in public life, and creating a better place to live in—for example, better schooling, lower crime rates, and lower tax evasion (Putnam, 2000). It both helps society and builds the capacity of individuals, like learning about society, developing civic

skills, and having a greater appreciation of the needs and interests of others in society as a whole. To ensure participation, there should be a focus on ideological, political, and socioeconomic relations. Many Western countries, including the USA, UK, and European countries, have started focusing on co-production with citizens and other agencies through partnerships, community engagement, and strategies of “responsibilities” (Balloch and Taylor, 2001). Participation is a fundamental right and has several benefits. Citizens, particularly youth, should participate actively in strengthening the democratic form of governance, which will work for the development of people. To enhance development in Nigeria, the participation of people, particularly the youth, is very essential at both local and central governance level. Nigeria should engage the youth to get demographic dividends.

Youth participation is key to ensure good governance to meet the desired goals. The state heads have been inviting and encouraging youth to participate as India needs an infusion of fresh blood combined with honesty and integrity to fulfil their aspirations by using their education and advanced technologies (Kothari, 1989). Throughout the last decade, it is observed that there has been an insistent and growing concern about the seemingly global decline of youth in the political process (Bermudez, 2012). Some studies were conducted to understand youth participation. Such studies emphasised the quantity of youth participation rather than the quality of participation (Kara, 2007). As stated by Morrissey (2000), the literature is unable to capture the quality of participation. This work conducts a study to understand the needs of education for youth participation in local governance.

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted using a descriptive survey research approach. Due to the large size of the population, a sample of 236 respondents was used. The population of the study included all undergraduate students of Delta State University, Agbor (Agbor campus), numbering around 2,200. The sample of 236 respondents was taken using a simple random sampling method. The researcher created a 22-item questionnaire called the education and sustainable democracy questionnaire (ESDQ) to collect data for the study. A and B were the two portions of the instrument. Section A dealt with the respondents' personal information, while Section B dealt with the study questions. Two specialists from the University of Delta Agbor's department of educational foundations validated the instruments. Cronbach's Alpha Method was used to examine the reliability, and a coefficient of 0.74 percent was obtained. Two research assistants were used to distribute 236 copies of the questionnaire. All of the questions were answered, and all of the questionnaire copies were returned. The Z-test was employed to evaluate the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance, while the mean and standard deviation were used to answer the study questions. For the research questions, the study used $n > 2.50$ as an acceptance range and 2.50 as a rejection range.

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULT Research

Question One.

What are the strategies for promoting sustainable democracy in Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean respondents of students are strategies to promoting sustainable democracy in Nigeria.

| S/n | Items | Mean | Std desc | Decision |
|-----|--|-------------|-------------|----------|
| 1 | Team work | 3.35 | 0.99 | Agree |
| 2 | Improved access and quality education | 3.75 | 0.44 | Agree |
| 3 | Public awareness of sustainability goals | 3.55 | 0.60 | Agree |
| 4 | Re-orienting existing education to address sustainability | 3.45 | 0.60 | Agree |
| 5 | Adequate training related to sectors of the economy | 3.75 | 0.44 | Agree |
| 6 | Use of technology to learn, live and work | 3.50 | 0.51 | Agree |
| 7 | Demonstration of global literacy | 3.60 | 0.50 | Agree |
| 8 | Civic and community engagement in sustainable programmes | 3.00 | 0.73 | Agree |
| 9 | Ensure critical and analytical thinking among the students | 3.50 | 0.61 | Agree |
| 10 | Honours students for academic excellence | 3.75 | 0.44 | Agree |
| 11 | De-emphasising ethnic sentiment | 3.70 | 0.66 | Agree |
| | Grand mean | 3.54 | 3.59 | |

The result from table 1 shows the mean response score of students on the 11 items of the questionnaire on research question 1. From the mean response by students, all the items had a mean score of above 2.50, which was set for the study. The overall mean score of 3.54 indicates that students agreed that all the items raised are strategies for promoting the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria.

Research Question Two

To what extent do education policies and implementations influence youths participation in democratic activities?

Table 2: Mean responses of students on how educational policies and implementations influences youths participation in democratic activities.

| S/n | Items | Mean | Std desc | Decision |
|-----|---|------|----------|----------|
| 1 | My formal education has no influence on my attitude to democratic activities | 3.25 | 0.72 | Agreed |
| 2 | The only time I am engaged in democratic activity is when I vote on election day. | 3.30 | 0.66 | Agreed |

| | | | | |
|----|--|-------------|------------|-----------|
| 3 | Our lecturers modeled democracy everyday in the classroom. | 3.55 | 0.59 | Agreed |
| 4 | Lack of democratic education in school hinders political literacy among the students | 3.60 | 0.50 | Agreed |
| 5 | I lack willingness to participate in a peaceful demonstration | 3.15 | 0.75 | Agreed |
| 6 | I could be more active by voicing out my concerns, but I am not interested | 2.50 | 0.89 | Disagreed |
| 7 | My school organizes training sessions aimed at building and equipping the students to abide by democratic principles | 2.40 | 0.88 | Disagreed |
| 8 | School authority does not interfere in students various activities. | 2.95 | 0.69 | Agreed |
| 9 | Projects are assigned to students in groups to encourage team work. | 3.35 | 0.59 | Agreed |
| 10 | Students unionism in my school is structured in a way that encourages active participation in democratic activities. | 3.20 | 0.62 | Agreed |
| 11 | School environment is safe for teaching and learning political ideas. | 3.25 | 0.79 | Agreed |
| | Grand mean | 3.12 | 0.7 | |

The result from table 2 indicates the mean response score of students on the items of the questionnaire. From the mean respondents, all the items had a mean score that was above the 2.50 set for the study, except items 6 and 7, which had mean scores of 2.50 and 2.40 respectively. Thus, the overall grand mean of 3.12 denotes that all the students to a great extent agreed that educational policies and implementations influence youth participation in democratic activities.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between education of youths and democracy in Nigeria.

Table 3: Z-test analyses for hypothesis One

| Group | N | X | SD | Z-calculations | Z-Critical | Remark |
|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Education | 126 | 3.61 | 2.76 | | | |
| | | | | 2.55 | 1.96 | Rejected |
| Democracy | 110 | 3.10 | 2.17 | | | |

At the 0.05 level of significance, the z-calculated (2.55) is greater than the table value of z-critical (1.96) at a 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states there is no significant relationship between youth education and democracy is hereby rejected. There is a relationship between the education of youth and democracy.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between male and female respondents on the role of education in sustaining democracy.

Table 4: z-test analysis for hypothesis Two.

| Group | N | X | SD | Z-calculations | Z-Critical | Remark |
|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Education | 120 | 3.76 | 2.76 | | | |
| | | | | 2.50 | 1.96 | Rejected |
| Democracy | 116 | 3.01 | 2.13 | | | |

From the above, z calculated (2.50) is greater than z-critical (1.96) at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis that stated that there is no significant relationship between male and female respondents on the role of education in sustaining democracy is hereby rejected. This means that there is a connection between what men and women said about the role of education in keeping democracy going.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study concludes that educational policy and execution have a favourable impact on young people's participation in democratic activities in Nigeria. This is because respondents agreed that lack of interest among youths is caused most of the time by state schools and modeling democratic activities, as well as a lack of capacity building and students' unwillingness to participate in peaceful demonstrations due to a lack of structured student unionism. The study's findings under hypothesis one revealed that in Nigeria, there is a strong link between education and democracy. This is in line with Eduardo and Yeaji's (2015) study on educational issues, level of achievement, and democracy. Their studies demonstrated that higher levels of education result in higher levels of democracy. This means that the rate at which young people take part in democratic activities depends on how much schooling they have.

Hypothesis two's findings also show that male and female students had similar responses to the role of education in supporting democracy in Nigeria. In reality, the current educational programmes are having a good impact on Nigeria's democracy. This, however, contradicts a report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) statistical year book and the World Education Report, which shows that in the United States, more than 80% of the population has some postsecondary education, about a quarter of the population has some post-secondary education, about a

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