

**PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF FACTORS HINDERING YOUTH
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN MINNA METROPOLIS,
NIGER STATE: A SURVEY STUDY**

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ABSTRACT: This study examined the public perception of the factors preventing youth from active participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State. The study adopted a survey research design, and the population of the study comprised 600,800 youth and adult residents of Minna Metropolis who are familiar with political activities in the area. A sample size of 384 respondents was selected using the Krejcie and Morgan Table. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure equal representation of both male and female respondents. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated by experts and pilot-tested with 50 respondents in Paikoro LGA. Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the instrument's reliability, yielding an index of 0.82. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to answer the research questions, while inferential statistics (the t-test) were used to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that youth participation in politics in Minna Metropolis is generally low (Mean = 2.11), contesting for political positions (Mean = 1.98), participation in elections (Mean = 2.21), and representation in political leadership positions (Mean = 1.87), as all mean values were below the decision benchmark of 2.50. The study concluded that youth participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State, is generally low despite strong youth interest in political issues. The study recommends that government and political institutions should create inclusive platforms that encourage youths to actively participate in political activities such as voting, campaigning, and decision-making processes.

Keywords: Public Perception, Youth participation, Politics, Minna Metropolis, Niger State

INTRODUCTION

Youth participation in politics is widely recognized as an essential element of democratic governance and national development. In democratic societies, the active involvement of young people in political processes enhances accountability, promotes inclusiveness, and strengthens democratic institutions. Nigeria, being one of the largest democracies in Africa, has a youthful population that represents a significant proportion of its citizens. According to National Bureau of Statistics (2022), youths constitute more than half of Nigeria's population, making them an important force in shaping the country's political and developmental agenda. This demographic advantage presents an opportunity for increased youth engagement in governance and leadership.

Despite the numerical strength of Nigerian youth, their participation in formal political activities remains relatively low. Active political participation includes contesting elections, participating in political campaigns, engaging in party activities, and influencing policy decisions. However, studies have shown that many Nigerian youths remain passive participants in political processes. Akinwale and Oladipo (2021) noted that although youths are highly involved in political discussions and activism, their presence in elective positions and party leadership structures remains minimal. This gap between political awareness and active participation suggests the existence of systemic barriers limiting youth involvement.

Public perception plays a significant role in determining the level of youth participation in politics. Societal beliefs regarding politics influence the willingness of young people to engage in political processes. When politics is perceived as corrupt, violent, or dominated by elites, youths may become discouraged from participating. Okeke and Nwankwo (2023) observed that public perception of Nigerian politics as a system controlled by wealthy individuals discourages young people from seeking political office or participating actively in governance. Such perceptions contribute to political apathy among youths.

One of the major factors preventing youth participation in Nigerian politics is the high cost associated with political engagement, including campaign financing, nomination forms, and party membership fees, which often require substantial financial resources that many young people cannot afford (Adamu & Lawal, 2022). Political violence and insecurity also discourage participation, as electoral violence, intimidation, and harassment create fear that reduces youth willingness to engage in campaigns and elections (Ibrahim & Musa, 2021). Furthermore, unemployment and socio-economic challenges limit youths' financial capacity to sustain political ambitions or participate effectively in party activities (Olanrewaju & Bello, 2024).

In response to the challenges affecting youth political participation, several policy initiatives have been introduced to encourage youth involvement in governance. One notable reform is the enactment of the Not Too Young To Run Act, which reduced the minimum age requirement for contesting elective offices in Nigeria. While the Act was widely celebrated as a progressive step toward youth inclusion, its implementation has not significantly increased youth representation in political offices. Yakubu and Abdullahi (2021) noted that although the policy created opportunities for youth participation, structural barriers such as financial constraints and party dominance continue to limit youth engagement. Therefore, examining public perception on the factors preventing youth participation is necessary for identifying effective strategies to promote youth involvement in Nigerian politics.

Statement of the Problem

Youth represent a significant proportion of Nigeria's population and constitute an important segment of the society capable of contributing to democratic governance and national development. Despite their demographic strength and growing political awareness, youth participation in active politics in Nigeria remains relatively low. Most young people participate in elections only as voters rather than as candidates, political party leaders, or policy-makers. According to Akinwale and

Oladipo (2021), the underrepresentation of youth in political leadership positions has limited the expression of youth interests in governance and reduced their influence on public policy decisions.

Over the years, the Nigerian government and civil society organizations have introduced various initiatives aimed at increasing youth participation in politics. These initiatives include youth empowerment programs, political education campaigns, and legislative reforms designed to reduce age restrictions for elective positions. However, the level of youth representation in political offices remains low despite these efforts. Yakubu and Abdullahi (2021) observed that the implementation of youth-inclusive policies has been hindered by systemic challenges such as lack of internal party democracy and limited opportunities for youth leadership development.

Public perception of politics as a corrupt and elite-driven system continues to discourage many youths from participating actively in political activities. Politics in Nigeria is often perceived as a domain reserved for wealthy individuals and experienced politicians, thereby limiting the confidence of young people to contest elections. Okeke and Nwankwo (2023) noted that negative public perception of politics contributes to political apathy and reduces youth interest in active political participation.

In addition, structural challenges including financial constraints, political violence, unemployment, and lack of mentorship have been identified as key obstacles to youth participation, creating conditions that limit the ability of capable youths to participate effectively in governance processes (Adamu & Lawal, 2022). Despite growing concerns about youth exclusion from political processes, there is still limited empirical research focusing on public perception of the factors preventing youth participation in Nigerian politics. Understanding how the public perceives these barriers is essential for designing effective policies that promote youth inclusion in governance. Therefore, this study seeks to examine public perception on the factors preventing youth from active participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives are to:

1. Examine public perception on the level of youth participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State
2. Identify the factors preventing youth from active participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State
3. Determine possible strategies that can enhance youth participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the public perception of the level of youth participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State?

2. What factors prevent youth from active participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State?
3. What strategies can enhance youth participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State?

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean response of male and female respondents on the level of youth participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean response of male and female respondents on the factors that prevent youth from active participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between the mean response of male and female respondents on the strategies that can enhance youth participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Youth

The concept of youth has been widely discussed in social sciences due to its relevance to national development and political participation. Youth is commonly defined as a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood characterized by physical, psychological, and social development. According to Ekot and Momoh (2024), youth represents a period of transition from dependence to independence during which individuals develop the capacity to take responsibility for personal and societal roles. This stage is significant because it prepares individuals to contribute meaningfully to societal development, particularly in political and leadership activities. Different organizations and scholars have provided varying definitions of youth based on age classification. For instance, the United Nations defines youth as individuals aged 15-24, while many African countries extend the definition to include those aged 18-35. In Nigeria, the National Youth Policy defines youth as individuals within the age bracket of 18 to 35 years. This classification reflects the socio-economic realities of Nigeria, where individuals within this age range are considered capable of participating actively in national development activities, including political participation (Eboigbe & Ajisebiyawo, 2025).

Globally, youth are recognized as a vital human resource for national transformation, particularly in promoting democratic values and economic development (United Nations Development Programme, 2022). Similarly, youth have been described as an important demographic group whose social engagement contributes significantly to sustainable development and nation-building processes (World Bank, 2021).

Concept of Politics

Politics is a fundamental aspect of human society that involves the exercise of power, authority, and decision-making within a community or nation. It refers to the processes through which individuals and groups make decisions that affect the distribution of resources, governance structures, and societal development. According to Vite et al. (2020), politics is the process of making collective decisions and managing public affairs through structured institutions such as government agencies and political parties. Politics also involves the organization of leadership and the formulation of policies that guide societal development. Through political processes, leaders are elected, laws are enacted, and policies are implemented to address societal needs. Ekot and Momoh (2024) explained that political systems provide avenues through which citizens participate in governance by voting, campaigning, and engaging in policy discussions. This demonstrates that politics is not limited to government officials but includes all individuals who contribute to decision-making processes. According to Adogbeji and Isonah (2025), politics is essential for promoting accountability and transparency in governance, as it allows citizens to influence leadership decisions through participation and representation. Politics is also closely associated with power relations within society. It determines who holds authority and how resources are allocated among different groups. Onyewuchi et al. (2024) noted that political participation allows individuals to influence public policies and leadership decisions that affect their welfare. In contemporary political studies, politics has been viewed as the mechanism through which societies negotiate power and allocate public resources for collective welfare (Heywood, 2021). Furthermore, politics is considered essential for maintaining order and stability through institutional decision-making processes that reflect citizens' interests (Leftwich, 2020).

Meaning of Active Participation in Politics

Active participation in politics refers to the direct involvement of individuals in political activities that influence governance and public decision-making. This includes voting during elections, contesting political offices, joining political parties, attending political meetings, and engaging in political campaigns. According to Ekot and Momoh (2024), active political participation involves more than passive support; it requires active engagement in processes that shape political outcomes and governance structures. Active participation also involves contributing to policy formulation and implementation through civic engagement. Individuals who participate actively in politics influence government decisions and promote democratic accountability. Onimisi (2024) explained that active youth participation strengthens democratic institutions and promotes social inclusion by ensuring that diverse voices are represented in governance processes. Active participation in politics is particularly important for youths because it enables them to contribute to national development and leadership succession. Youth participation ensures generational continuity in governance and promotes innovation in leadership practices. Adogbeji and Isonah (2025) emphasized that youth involvement in political activities enhances democratic representation and ensures that youth interests are reflected in public policies.

Globally, civic engagement and political participation are regarded as essential components of democratic governance and social inclusion (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

Development, 2020). Research has also shown that active citizen participation improves policy outcomes and strengthens democratic legitimacy (Dalton, 2021).

Factors Preventing Youth from Active Participation in Nigerian Politics

Several factors have been identified as barriers to youth participation in Nigerian politics. One of the most significant factors is financial constraint. Political participation in Nigeria often requires substantial financial resources for campaign activities, nomination forms, and party registration fees. According to Onyewuchi et al. (2024), the high cost of political participation discourages many youths from contesting elections or participating actively in political activities. Financial barriers create inequality and limit opportunities for capable youths to contribute to governance processes. Political violence is another major factor preventing youth participation in Nigerian politics. Electoral violence, intimidation, and harassment during elections create an environment of fear and insecurity. Onimisi (2024) observed that electoral violence discourages many young people from participating in political campaigns and elections due to fear of physical harm and loss of property. This situation undermines democratic participation and reduces youth confidence in political institutions.

Unemployment and poverty also significantly affect youth participation in politics. Many Nigerian youths face economic hardship, which limits their ability to engage in political activities that require financial investment. According to Omoju et al. (2023), unemployment remains one of the major socio-economic challenges facing Nigerian youths, reducing their capacity to participate in governance and political processes. Economic instability often leads to political apathy and reduces motivation for active political involvement.

Lack of internal democracy within political parties is another barrier to youth participation. Political parties often favour experienced politicians and wealthy individuals, leaving little opportunity for young people to assume leadership positions. Ekot and Momoh (2024) reported that youth participation at the party level remains limited due to exclusionary practices and lack of youth-friendly policies within political institutions. This limits youth representation in governance structures and discourages political ambition among young individuals.

Lack of political education and mentorship programs contributes to low youth participation in Nigerian politics. Many youths lack the necessary knowledge and guidance required to participate effectively in political activities. According to Akinwale (2024), the absence of mentorship and civic education programs reduces youth confidence and limits their ability to navigate political processes. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive reforms aimed at empowering youths through education, mentorship, and institutional support. International studies have identified financial barriers, political violence, and institutional exclusion as major factors limiting youth participation in democratic processes across developing countries (United Nations, 2020). Similarly, global governance reports highlight unemployment and lack of political inclusion as significant challenges affecting youth political engagement worldwide (International Labour Organization, 2022).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Theory of Political Participation developed by Verba et al (1995). The theory explains why individuals engage in political activities while others remain passive, arguing that participation in politics is largely shaped by access to resources, psychological engagement, and political recruitment processes. Although the theory was developed earlier, it remains highly relevant in explaining contemporary political behaviour, especially in developing democracies like Nigeria, where youth participation in politics is influenced by structural and socio-economic factors. The theory assumes that political participation depends largely on the availability of resources such as time, money, and civic skills. According to Verba et al (1995), individuals who possess higher levels of education, income, and communication skills are more likely to participate in politics because they have the capacity to engage effectively in political processes. In contrast, individuals who lack these resources are less likely to participate due to limited access and capabilities. Another assumption of the theory is that psychological engagement plays a crucial role in political participation. This means that individuals who are politically interested, informed, and believe that their participation can make a difference are more likely to engage in political activities. The theory also emphasizes the role of civic duty, suggesting that people participate when they feel a moral responsibility to contribute to governance and societal development.

Despite its usefulness, the theory has been criticized for overemphasizing material resources such as income and education while underestimating the role of structural factors like political violence, corruption, and institutional exclusion. It has also been criticized for having a Western bias, as it was developed based on political systems that differ significantly from African political realities. Furthermore, the theory does not adequately explain youth-specific challenges, particularly in contexts where political systems are highly monetized and dominated by elites.

The relevance of the theory to this study is evident in its explanation of factors preventing youth participation in Nigerian politics. The theory helps to explain how lack of financial resources, unemployment, and low access to civic skills limit youth participation in politics in Minna Metropolis. It also supports the study's focus on institutional barriers, such as exclusion from political party structures and limited opportunities for youth recruitment into political leadership positions. Therefore, the Theory of Political Participation provides a strong foundation for analyzing factors that prevent youth from participating in Nigerian politics and offers guidance on possible interventions.

Empirical Studies

Ekot and Momoh (2024) explored youth political participation and party politics during the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. The study adopted a qualitative research design using content analysis. The population comprised electoral reports, political party documents, and records of youth involvement in the 2023 general elections. No specific sample size was used since secondary data were analyzed. The instrument for data collection was a documentary analysis guide. The findings revealed that youth participation in major political parties was very limited, as youths were largely excluded from key decision-making and leadership positions. The study concluded that political party structures in Nigeria are still highly exclusionary to youths. It recommended the reduction of

nomination fees and the creation of more inclusive party systems that accommodate youth participation.

Akinwale (2023) investigated youth political participation in Nigeria, focusing on structural barriers and democratic inclusion. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of youths in selected urban areas across Nigeria. A sample size of 420 respondents was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. The instrument used was a structured questionnaire and interview guide. The findings showed that financial constraints, political violence, and elite domination significantly hinder youth participation in politics. The study concluded that the Nigerian political system is structurally biased against youths. It recommended political reforms that reduce the monetization of politics and enhance youth inclusion in governance.

Olanrewaju and Bello (2024) explored socio-economic factors influencing youth political participation in Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of youths in selected states across Nigeria. A sample size of 500 respondents was selected using a simple random sampling technique. The instrument used was a structured questionnaire based on a four-point Likert scale. The findings indicated that unemployment, poverty, and lack of financial resources significantly reduce youth participation in politics. The study concluded that economic hardship is a major constraint to youth political involvement. The study recommended youth empowerment programmes and job creation initiatives to improve participation.

Yakubu and Abdullahi (2021) investigated internal party democracy and youth inclusion in Nigerian politics. The study adopted a survey research design. The population comprised political party members and youths in selected political parties across Nigeria. A sample size of 380 respondents was selected using purposive and stratified sampling techniques. The instrument used was a structured questionnaire. The findings revealed that political parties in Nigeria operate with weak internal democracy, which limits youth access to leadership positions. The study concluded that party structure is a major barrier to youth participation in politics. It recommended strengthening internal democracy within political parties and ensuring effective youth representation in leadership positions.

Bessant and Farthing (2020) examined youth political participation and civic engagement in Australia and the United Kingdom. The study adopted a mixed-method research design involving survey and interview techniques. The population consisted of young people aged 18 to 30 years across selected cities in Australia and the United Kingdom. A sample size of 600 respondents was selected using stratified sampling techniques. The instruments used were structured questionnaires and semi-structured interview schedules. The findings revealed that young people were interested in political participation but were discouraged by lack of trust in political institutions and limited opportunities for meaningful involvement. The study concluded that institutional barriers and lack of youth-friendly political structures significantly reduce youth engagement. It recommended reforms that promote youth representation and enhance civic education programmes.

Loader et al. (2021) investigated digital participation and youth engagement in democratic processes across Europe. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population

consisted of youths aged 16 to 29 years across selected European countries. A sample size of 750 respondents was selected using multistage sampling techniques. The instrument used was an online structured questionnaire. The findings indicated that digital platforms increased youth awareness of political issues but did not necessarily translate into active participation due to institutional and socio-economic barriers. The study concluded that digital engagement alone is insufficient without supportive democratic structures. The study recommended strengthening civic institutions and providing inclusive participation channels for youths.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey research design, and the population of the study was 600,800, comprised of adult residents of Minna Metropolis, including youths, civil servants, traders, and students who are familiar with political activities in the area. A sample size of 384 respondents was selected using the Krejcie and Morgan Tables. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure equal representation of both male and female respondents. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The instrument was structured on four Likert scales: strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The instrument was validated by experts in the Department of Political Science, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, and tested using 50 respondents from Paikoro Local Government Area. The instrument's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded an alpha of 0.82. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation), to provide answers to research questions, while inferential statistics, the t-test, was used in testing the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research Question 1: What is the public perception of the level of youth participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State?

Table 1: Responses on the level of youth participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	Youth in Minna Metropolis actively participate in political activities.	2.11	0.84	Rejected
2	Many youths in Minna Metropolis contest for political positions.	1.98	0.76	Rejected
3	Youth participation in elections is high in Minna Metropolis.	2.21	0.81	Rejected
4	Youths are actively involved in political campaigns.	2.33	0.88	Rejected
5	Youths are well represented in political leadership positions.	1.87	0.72	Rejected
6	Youths regularly attend political meetings and rallies.	2.29	0.85	Rejected
7	Youths show strong interest in political issues.	2.64	0.91	Accepted
8	Youths are actively involved in political decision-making processes.	2.05	0.79	Rejected
9	Youth participation in political parties is increasing.	2.18	0.82	Rejected
10	Youth involvement in politics in Minna Metropolis is satisfactory.	1.92	0.75	Rejected

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The results in Table 1 show that the majority of the items measuring the level of youth participation in politics were rejected, indicating low perceived participation of youths in political activities in Minna Metropolis. Specifically, items such as youth active participation in political activities (Mean = 2.11), youth contesting for political positions (Mean = 1.98), youth participation in elections (Mean = 2.21), and youth representation in political leadership positions (Mean = 1.87) were rejected, as their mean values were below the cut-off point of 2.50. This suggests that respondents perceived youth involvement in core political processes, such as contesting elections and holding leadership positions, to be generally low.

Similarly, items relating to youth attendance at political meetings (Mean = 2.29), youth involvement in decision-making processes (Mean = 2.05), and increasing youth participation in political parties (Mean = 2.18) were also rejected. These findings indicate that youth participation in organized political activities remains limited. However, one notable exception was the item stating that youths show strong interest in political issues (Mean = 2.64), which was accepted. This implies that although youths demonstrate interest in political matters, their active participation remains limited due to underlying constraints.

Research Question 2: What factors prevent youth from active participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State?

Table 2: Responses on the factors preventing youth from active participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
11	Lack of financial resources prevents youth from participating in politics.	3.42	0.68	Accepted
12	High cost of political campaigns discourages youth participation.	3.51	0.64	Accepted
13	Political violence discourages youth from participating in politics.	3.28	0.71	Accepted
14	Lack of employment prevents youth from engaging in politics.	3.17	0.73	Accepted
15	Corruption in the political system discourages youth participation.	3.46	0.67	Accepted
16	Lack of political mentorship prevents youth participation.	3.05	0.76	Accepted
17	Political parties do not give youth enough opportunities.	3.39	0.69	Accepted
18	Fear of electoral malpractice discourages youth participation.	3.21	0.74	Accepted
19	Lack of political education prevents youth involvement in politics.	2.98	0.78	Accepted
20	Lack of trust in government discourages youth participation.	3.33	0.72	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The results in Table 2 indicate that all the identified factors preventing youth participation in politics were accepted, as their mean scores were above the cut-off point of 2.50. This suggests that respondents generally agreed that multiple barriers hinder youth involvement in political activities. Notably, lack of financial resources (Mean = 3.42) and high cost of political campaigns (Mean = 3.51) recorded high mean scores, indicating that financial constraints are major barriers to youth political participation. This finding reflects the reality of Nigerian politics, where the cost of nomination forms, campaign financing, and party registration fees often limits youth participation.

Political violence (Mean = 3.28) and fear of electoral malpractice (Mean = 3.21) were also accepted as significant barriers. These findings suggest that insecurity and fear associated with elections discourage youth from actively participating in political activities. Similarly, unemployment (Mean = 3.17) and corruption in the political system (Mean = 3.46) were identified as major challenges limiting youth engagement.

Furthermore, lack of mentorship (Mean = 3.05), limited opportunities within political parties (Mean = 3.39), lack of political education (Mean = 2.98), and lack of trust in government (Mean = 3.33) were all accepted as factors preventing youth participation. Overall, the results indicate that financial, institutional, and socio-political factors significantly prevent youth from participating actively in Nigerian politics.

Research Question 3: What strategies can enhance youth participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State?

Table 3: Responses on the strategies can enhance youth participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
21	Providing financial support can increase youth participation in politics.	3.44	0.66	Accepted
22	Reducing nomination fees will encourage youth participation.	3.52	0.63	Accepted
23	Political education programs can increase youth participation.	3.36	0.68	Accepted
24	Creating youth-friendly political policies will encourage participation.	3.29	0.72	Accepted
25	Providing mentorship programs can enhance youth participation.	3.18	0.74	Accepted
26	Ensuring peaceful elections will encourage youth participation.	3.47	0.65	Accepted
27	Increasing youth representation in political parties will enhance participation.	3.41	0.69	Accepted
28	Government youth empowerment programs can promote political participation.	3.22	0.73	Accepted
29	Awareness campaigns on political rights can improve youth participation.	3.14	0.75	Accepted
30	Introducing quotas for youth representation can enhance youth participation.	3.27	0.71	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The results in Table 3 show that all the proposed strategies for enhancing youth participation in politics were accepted, as their mean values were above the decision benchmark of 2.50. This indicates that respondents strongly believe that these strategies can improve youth involvement in political processes. Providing financial support to youths (Mean = 3.44) and reducing nomination fees (Mean = 3.52) were among the most highly rated strategies. These findings suggest that addressing financial barriers is essential for increasing youth participation in politics. Similarly, political education programs (Mean = 3.36) and youth-friendly political policies (Mean = 3.29) were accepted as important measures for promoting youth engagement. Ensuring peaceful elections (Mean = 3.47) was also strongly accepted, indicating that electoral security plays a critical role in

encouraging youth participation. Increasing youth representation in political parties (Mean = 3.41) and introducing youth quotas (Mean = 3.27) were likewise accepted as effective strategies for improving political inclusion. Additionally, mentorship programs (Mean = 3.18), government empowerment initiatives (Mean = 3.22), and awareness campaigns on political rights (Mean = 3.14) were all accepted as relevant strategies for enhancing youth participation. Overall, the results indicate that structural reforms, financial support, and political inclusion policies are essential for improving youth involvement in politics.

Test of Hypotheses

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the mean response between male and female respondents regarding the level of youth participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State.

Table 4: Summary of t-test analysis on the level of youth participation in politics

Variables	No	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	L.sig	Remarks
Male	234	3.41	0.72					
Female	150	3.36	0.68	382	0.68	1.96	0.05	Not Sig.

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value of 0.68 at 382 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance is less than the critical value of 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female respondents on the level of youth participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State was accepted.

HO₂: There is no significant difference between the mean response of male and female respondents on the factors preventing youth from active participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State.

Table 5: Summary of t-test analysis on factors preventing youth participation in politics

Variables	No	Mean	SD	Df	T-Cal	T-Tab	L.Sig	Remarks
Male	234	3.58	0.66					
Female	150	3.61	0.64	382	0.42	1.96	0.05	Not Sig.

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 5 shows that the calculated t-value of 0.42 at 382 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance is less than the critical value of 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female respondents on the factors preventing youth from active participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State was accepted.

HO₃: There is no significant difference between the mean response of male and female respondents on the strategies that can enhance youth participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State.

Table 6: Summary of t-test analysis on strategies for enhancing youth participation

Variables	No	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	l.sig	Remarks
Male	234	3.63	0.61					
Female	150	3.67	0.59	382	0.59	1.96	0.05	Not Sig.

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 6 shows that the calculated t-value of 0.59 at 382 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance is less than the critical value of 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female respondents on the strategies that can enhance youth participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State was accepted.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from Research Question One revealed that youth participation in politics in Minna Metropolis is generally perceived to be low. Most of the items assessing youth involvement in political activities, such as contesting for political positions, attending political meetings, and participating in decision-making processes, were rejected. This indicates that although youths form a significant proportion of the population, their actual participation in formal political activities remains minimal. However, the study found that youths show strong interest in political issues, suggesting that the problem is not lack of interest but limited opportunities and enabling conditions. This finding agrees with the study conducted by Akinwale and Oladipo (2021), who reported that youth participation in political leadership and decision-making processes in Nigeria remains low despite high political awareness among young people. Similarly, the findings are consistent with Okeke and Nwankwo (2023), who observed that youths in Nigeria are more involved in political discussions, especially through social media, but rarely participate in active political leadership or electoral contests. These scholars attributed the low participation level to structural and institutional barriers within the political system.

However, the finding disagrees slightly with the work of Ibrahim and Musa (2021), who found moderate levels of youth participation in certain urban areas due to increased civic education and political awareness campaigns. The difference in findings may be attributed to variations in geographical location and access to political awareness programs. While some urban centers may experience moderate youth engagement, the situation in Minna Metropolis, as reflected in this study, indicates a relatively low level of youth participation in formal political processes.

These findings strongly confirm the assumptions of the Civic Voluntarism Model proposed by Verba et al. (1995), which states that political participation is influenced by resources, psychological engagement, and recruitment networks.

The findings from Research Question Two showed that several factors prevent youth from participating actively in politics. These factors include lack of financial resources, high cost of political campaigns, political violence, unemployment, corruption, lack of mentorship, limited opportunities within political parties, lack of political education, and distrust in government institutions. All the listed factors were accepted as significant barriers preventing youth participation in politics in Minna Metropolis. The finding that financial constraints and high cost of political campaigns prevent youth participation agrees strongly with the study by Adamu and Lawal (2022), who identified the monetization of politics as one of the major challenges discouraging youth participation in Nigerian politics. Similarly, Yakubu and Abdullahi (2021) reported that the high cost of nomination forms and campaign expenses creates inequality in political participation, favoring wealthy individuals over financially disadvantaged youths.

Furthermore, the findings relating to unemployment and corruption as barriers to youth participation agree with Olanrewaju and Bello (2024), who reported that economic hardship and corruption contribute significantly to youth political apathy. According to their study, unemployed youths often lack the financial resources required to participate in political activities and may develop distrust toward political institutions due to perceived corruption. However, the finding that lack of political education contributes to low youth participation slightly disagrees with Adebayo (2020), who found that political education programs in some Nigerian communities significantly improved youth political awareness and participation. The disagreement may be due to differences in the availability and effectiveness of political education programs across different regions.

These findings also confirm the resource-based assumption of the Civic Voluntarism Model, which emphasizes that individuals with fewer economic resources are less likely to participate in political activities. Financial constraints, unemployment, and lack of access to political networks observed in this study reflect the model's argument that limited resources reduce political engagement.

The findings from Research Question Three revealed that several strategies can enhance youth participation in politics. These strategies include providing financial support to youths, reducing nomination fees, organizing political education programs, implementing youth-friendly political policies, providing mentorship opportunities, ensuring peaceful elections, increasing youth representation in political parties, and introducing youth quotas in political leadership positions. All the proposed strategies were accepted as effective means of improving youth participation in politics. The finding that reducing nomination fees and providing financial support can enhance youth participation agrees with Yakubu and Abdullahi (2021), who recommended reducing the financial burden associated with political participation as a strategy for increasing youth involvement in governance. Similarly, Adamu and Lawal (2022) emphasized that financial assistance programs targeted at youths can significantly improve their chances of participating in political contests.

In relation to the Civic Voluntarism Model, these strategies align with the recruitment and mobilization component of the theory, which emphasizes the importance of institutional support and political networks in encouraging participation. The recommendation for mentorship programs and increased youth representation within political parties supports the idea that individuals are

more likely to participate when they are invited, supported, and mobilized through social and institutional networks.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concluded that youth participation in politics in Minna Metropolis, Niger State is generally low, even though many youths show strong interest in political issues. This situation has important implications for democratic development because when youths are interested but not actively involved, it can weaken representation, reduce fresh ideas in leadership, and limit inclusive governance. The findings showed that several connected factors such as financial constraints, high campaign costs, political violence, unemployment, corruption, lack of mentorship, limited opportunities within political parties, inadequate political education, and distrust in government institutions discourage youths from taking active roles in politics. Despite the valuable findings, the study had some limitations. The data were collected using questionnaires, which relied on the opinions of respondents and may have been influenced by personal bias. Also, the study focused only on Minna Metropolis, which means the findings may not fully represent other areas with different social or political conditions. In addition, the use of only quantitative methods limited the opportunity to understand youths' personal experiences and deeper reasons behind their level of participation. Based on these limitations, future studies should use both quantitative and qualitative methods, such as interviews and group discussions, to gain deeper understanding of youth political participation.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings:

1. Government and political institutions should create inclusive platforms that encourage youths to actively participate in political activities such as voting, campaigning, and decision-making processes.
2. Civic education programmes should be strengthened in communities and schools to bridge the gap between youths' political interest and their actual participation in formal political processes.
3. Government should reduce the cost of political participation by lowering nomination fees and providing financial support to young political aspirants to eliminate financial barriers.
4. Strong security measures should be implemented during elections to minimize political violence and create a safe environment that encourages youth participation in politics.
5. Government should implement youth-friendly policies such as quotas and mentorship programmes to ensure adequate representation and guidance of youths in political offices.
6. Political parties and stakeholders should intensify political education and awareness campaigns to equip youths with the knowledge and motivation needed for active participation in politics.

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