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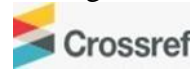


Media Contents and Youths' Attitudes toward Nigeria's Political Activities

 Anthony Apeh Amedu^{1*} & Yemi Kunle Oginni²

Emails: amedu.anthony@lcu.edu.ng & smartworldmedia@gmail.com

Department of Mass Communication and Media Technology, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria



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Abstract

Purpose: A politically engaged individual will pay close attention on various subjects related to public space or collective concerns, such as the environment, public policy, human rights, elections, and other relevant factors. Political apathy, on the other hand, refers to a general state of indifference towards the events and governance of one's political locality. Therefore, this study examined the relationship between media contents and youths' attitudes toward Nigeria's political activities.

Methodology: This study was anchored on Cognitive Mobilisation Theory. The study adopted the correlation survey research design. The study targeted Nigerian youths aged 18-35. Stratified and convenience sampling techniques were used in selecting the respondents. The study utilized a self-designed questionnaire called the Media Political Education Contents and Youths' Attitudes, Questionnaire (MEYPOQ). Copies of the questionnaire were electronically administered using (<https://docs.google.com>). The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to process the data, which was presented as frequency distributions for all items in charts and tables, the mean, and standard deviation.

Findings: Findings from the study show that 435 (80.2%) of the respondents accessed political education contents on social media, 405 respondents (75%) accessed such content via digital media, 403 (74.5%) accessed through graphics/digital graphics, 74.14% (400) accessed via electronics/broadcast, and 62.64% (338) of the respondents have accessed or seen political education via print media. The attitude of Nigerian youths towards political activities is positive (Weighted Mean = 2.56; S.D = 0.87). An increase in media education contents will lead to an increase in attitudes of Nigerian youths towards political activities by 0.861.

Recommendations: The study recommends that political stakeholders should use the opportunities presented by the media to change the apathetic and hostile attitudes of youths towards political actors and activities into trust, acceptance, cooperation and support.

Keywords: *Media Contents, Youths' Attitudes, Political Activities, Interest, Apathy*

Word Count: 294

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Youths' attitudes, in this study, can be expressed as interest in or apathy towards political activities. The continued existence and growth of democracies in any nation is dependent upon the nation's level of political interest among its citizens especially the younger generation (Amedu, 2023). A politically engaged individual will pay close attention on various subjects related to public space or collective concerns, such as the environment, public policy, human rights, elections, and other relevant factors (Wray-Lake, 2019). Political interest can be simply explained as the degree to which politics is attractive to people in a given environment. The level of political interest among young people is an essential factor because it is among the most reliable predictors of political participation (Amedu, 2023). The reason for this is straightforward: young people in present-day society simultaneously represent a significant political potential and a dormant problematic element of the population. This is due to the fact that their political behaviour is less predictable than that of other social groups (Tariq, Zolkepli & Ahmad, 2022).

Political apathy, conversely, refers to a general state of indifference towards the events and governance of one's political locality. When citizens are politically apathetic, they show a lack of interest in activities such as elections, public discourse, and civic responsibilities (Erubami, Bebenimibo & Ohaja, 2021). As a result, this can lead to lower voter registration, decreased voter turnout during elections, and reluctance to engage in protests against systematic failures. Additionally, an individual characterized by political apathy may also lack passion when participating in socio-political disputes, be unwilling to assist law enforcement agents with vital information, and become generally indifferent to government policies and programmes, regardless of their implications (Oji & Erubami, 2020).

People often display reduced motivation to take action when they perceive that their efforts may not yield the desired results (Amedu & Oginni, 2023). The sensation of efficacy is perhaps the fulcrum upon which human agency hangs. Studies have demonstrated that political efficacy is a strong predictor of political involvement, and it is an essential mediator between general self-efficacy and political participation (Oji & Erubami, 2020). In addition, political efficacy is a strong predictor of political engagement. It encompasses an individual's conviction that his/her action can influence the overall political process. Such assurances typically include the internal feeling that individuals possess the capacity and political competence to act (internal efficacy), and the expectation that the government will respond appropriately to their actions (external efficacy).

In contemporary society, the youths simultaneously represent a large political potential and a latent source of unpredictability within the population. Their political conduct is less predictable compared to other social groups since they are more politically engaged. Young people exhibit a notably lower participation rate in political institutions and processes, often expressing a greater reluctance to vote compared to older generations. The vitality of a democratic society is threatened not only by the youth's disinterest in politics but also lack of awareness regarding political issues. Alongside the generational gap between young people and older people, there exists a gender gap between men and women in terms of their interest in politics. The level of interest that men have in politics, current events, and government is higher than that of women (Amedu, 2023). This disparity can be attributed to a variety of factors (including situational, structural, and sex-role socialisation). On the other hand, researchers had observed no gender differences in the impacts of political interest on changes in autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Amedu & Oginni, 2023). The recent decline in political interest and electoral participation among young people in mature democracies has motivated a number of researchers to question the influence that the Internet has on political participation among the younger population (Chadwick, O'Loughlin & Vaccari, 2017).

The role of the media in informing and mobilising people for democratic processes is generally considered crucial. Consequently, their reports have a tendency to exert a significant amount of impact on the political behaviour of individuals. In addition, the ability of the media to influence public opinion through the content and environment of political discourse has serious repercussions for democracies (Erubami, 2022). Just like a double-edged sword, the media possesses the potential to either raise the degree of political engagement or raise the level of political apathy. In this context, proponents of the media mobilisation theory argue that there is a positive association between the media usage and engagement in political processes (Erubami, 2022).

The mass media, in its role as the society's watchdogs, direct the attention of the public towards matters pertaining to governance and public issues. It is thought that the media have the potential to inspire political consciousness, renaissance, and interest among citizens, including the youths, by giving coverage of political actions, policies, and programmes that are factual and in-depth. A political awakening of this magnitude would, in turn, raise the threshold for public political participation and deflate political indifference, particularly among young people (Erubami, Bebenimibo & Ohaja, 2021).

One of the many outlets of the media that is devoted to the dissemination of information on a variety of topics, including politics, is the newspaper. Therefore, getting news from a newspaper is one of the strongest predictors of political participation. It is expected that the level of involvement or apathy that young people have toward politics would be influenced by their exposure to political content in the media (Yamamoto, Kushin & Dalisay, 2017). Research suggests that individuals who heavily rely on mass media, particularly television, are more likely to have lower levels of subjective efficacy, leading increased political apathy. Television has garnered significant attention in this regard. Given the overlapping link that exists between people's perceptions and their actions, it is possible that the way young people perceive media-political information may have an effect on their political behaviour.

Cognitive Mobilisation Theory

Regarding the cognitive aspect of political education and participation, political scientists speculate that both education and political involvement stimulate political literacy as an internal process. Thus, cognitive mobilisation theory as profounded by Ronald Inglehart postulates that political education and political engagement activates an individual's mental capabilities when dealing with politics (Amedu, 2023). Cognitive mobilisation theory is the process through which people receive their cognitive cues to make decisions related to voting and other forms of political activities. Notably, political education has a strong effect because it reduces the costs and increases the benefit of voting in multiple ways. First, education increases cognitive skills that facilitate learning about politics. Second, individuals with higher education levels receive more gratification from electoral participation (Amedu, 2023). Thus, political education, according to cognitive mobilisation theorists, helps people overcome the bureaucratic obstacle involved in the political process. It is not solely higher education that increases one's likelihood of participating in politics, but rather the socialisation process that is provided through education. In essence, the cognitive mobilisation theory of political literacy argues that political education increases engagement in politics by developing the citizens' cognitive skills which in turn enables them to process complex political information enhancing their sense of civic duty (Amechi, Innocent & Ikechukwu, 2018).

The rationale behind this theory, as applied to this study, is that media-based political education has the potential to incrementally enhance ideological consciousness. It can equip young individuals with sufficient knowledge, thereby previously indifferent, hostile, prejudiced, and uninformed attitudes towards politics into a sense of political efficacy, interest, empathy, acceptance, and trust in political

processes. Afterwards, this may lead to political participation like voting, joining political campaigns, becoming party members, engaging in voluntary work, assuming civic responsibilities and participating in demonstrations with the ultimate goal of achieving a desirable national development.

Statement of the Problem

Indeed, history shows that young Nigerians exhibited positive attitudes and a great desire to participate in politics. For example, Anthony Enahoro, who at the age of 29, played a pivotal role as a member of the Federal Parliament when he moved the motion for Nigeria's independence in 1953. One could argue that the choice made by the British government to grant independence to Nigeria in 1960 was significantly influenced by the pressure exerted by the youth political movement like the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM). Likewise, the formation of the People's Union in 1908, the Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNDP) in 1923, and the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) in 1944 underscores the pivotal roles played by youths in various aspects of political parties and nation-building in Nigeria.

Presently, substantial evidence to suggests that young Nigerians are being marginalised from the political sphere, and as a result, they are currently not participating in politics as expected. Questions arise regarding the positive attitude showcased by Nigerian youths towards political activities. Additionally, there is curiosity about the existence of media-based political education contents targeted at the Nigerian youths and the extent of their exposure to political education through the media. This study, therefore, investigated the relationship between political education, through the media, and the attitudes of young people towards Nigeria's current political activities.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between media-based educational contents and Nigerian youths' attitudes towards political activities. The specific objectives were as follows to:

- i. Identify the forms of media-based political education contents targeted at Nigerian youths;
- ii. Assess the attitudes of Nigerian youths towards political activities; and
- iii. Determine the relationship between media educational contents and attitudes of Nigerian youths towards political activities.

Research Questions

The following research questions are posited in relations to the research objectives:

- i. What are the forms of media political education contents targeted at the Nigerian youths?
- ii. What is the attitude of Nigerian youths towards political activities?

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between media educational contents and the attitudes of Nigerian youths towards political activities.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the correlation survey research design. The design helped to appraise the consequences and interrelationship of the independent and dependent variables of the study. The study's target population consisted of Nigerian youths aged 18-35 years, encompassing all six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Stratified and convenience sampling techniques were used in selecting the respondents for the

study. Stratified sampling technique was initially adopted in selecting the sample across the six (6) geopolitical zones: North-East, North-Centre, North-West, South-East, South-West and South-South. The stratified sampling was further used to select specific six (6) states: Adamawa, Kogi, Kano, Enugu, Oyo and Delta. Convenience sampling technique was subsequently used to freely select respondents within these six (6) states, resulting in 510 participants. Data collection involved the distribution of a self-designed questionnaire named the "Media Political Education Contents and Youths' Attitudes Questionnaire (MEYPQ)." The questionnaire was administered electronically using Google Forms through the following link: <https://docs.google.com>.-The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to process the data and presented in the form of frequency distributions, charts, tables, means, and standard deviations.

3.0 FINDINGS

Demographic Information of Respondents

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Respondents (N =540)

Demographic Variable	Questionnaire Items	S/W	S/E	S/S	N/E	N/W	N/C	Total
Gender	Male	50 (55.5%)	48 (53.3%)	26 (28.9%)	75 (83.3%)	57 (63.3%)	54 (60%)	344 (57.3)
	Female	40 (44.4%)	42 (46.7%)	64 (71.1%)	15 (16.7%)	33 (36.7%)	36 (40%)	196 (42.7)
Age	18-20 Yrs	8 (8.9%)	7 (7.8%)	5 (5.6%)	4 (4.4%)	4 (4.4%)	11 (12.2%)	39 (7.2)
	21-25 Yrs	28 (31.1%)	42 (46.7%)	29 (32.2%)	18 (20%)	35 (38.9%)	14 (15.6%)	166 (30.8)
	26-30 Yrs	39 (43.3%)	28 (31.1%)	45 (50%)	62 (68.9%)	38 (42.2%)	52 (57.8%)	264 (48.9)
	31-35 Yrs	15 (16.7%)	13 (14.4%)	11 (12.2%)	6 (6.7%)	13 (14.4%)	13 (14.4%)	71 (13.1)
Education	SSCE/OND	9 (10%)	36 (40%)	22 (24.4%)	43 (47.8%)	37 (41.1%)	13 (14.4%)	160 (29.6)
	B.Sc./HND	52 (57.8%)	41 (41.6%)	57 (63.3%)	44 (48.9%)	51 (56.7%)	69 (76.7%)	314 (58)
	M.Sc	24 (26.7%)	9 (10.0%)	8 (8.9%)	3 (3.3%)	2 (2.2%)	5 (5.6%)	51 (9.6)
	Ph.D	5 (5.6%)	4 (4.4%)	3 (3.3%)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (3.3%)	15 (2.8)
	Total	90 (100)	90 (100)	90 (100)	90 (100)	90 (100)	90 (100)	540 (100)

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Key: S/W= South-West, S/E= South-East, S/S= South-South, N/E= North-East, N/W= North-West, N/C= North-Central

Table 1 shows the demographic distribution of the respondents (youths) across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria, namely: South-West, South-East, South-South, North-West, North-East and North-Central. From the Table, 50 (55.5%) of the youths in the South-West region are male respondents, while 40

(44.4%) are female respondents. In the South-East region, male respondents are 48 (53.3%), while the female respondents are 42 (46.7%). In the South-South geopolitical region, more female-to-male ratio of the youths was observed, with 26 (28.9%) are male respondents while 64 (71.1%) are female respondents. Furthermore, in the North-East, 75 (83.3%) are male respondents, while 15 (16.7%) are female respondents. Similarly, in the North-West, 53(63.3%) are male respondents, while 33(36.7%) are female respondents. In the North-Central, 54 (60%) of the youths are male and 36 (40%) are female. This, therefore, implies that there are more male across all the six geopolitical zones in this study. Also, Northern region (North-East, North-West and North-Central) has a higher number of male respondents compared to the Southern region (South-West, South-East and South-South). However, the North-East has the highest male-to-female ratio among all regions, while the South-South region has the highest female-to-male ratio.

Shifting the focus to age group, in the South-West, the majority of youths fall within the 26-30 age group, accounting for 43.3% (39) of the respondents. The age group 21-25 constitutes 31.1% (28), 31-35 comprises 16.7% (15), and 15-20 represents 8.9% (8). In the South-East, the largest age group is 21-25, constituting 46.7% (42) of the respondents. The 26-30 age group accounts for 31.1% (28), 31-35 represents 14.4 (13), and 15-20 consists of 7.8%. In the South-South, the majority fall within the 26-30 age group, amounting to 50% (45), followed by 21-25 at 32.2% (29), 31-35 at 12.2% (11), and 15-20 at 5.6% (5).

Similarly, in the North-East, the majority of youths, 68.9% (62), are within 26-30 years, 20% (18) of the youths are within 21-25 years, 6.7% (6) are within 31-35 years, while 4.4% (4) are within 15-20 years. In the same vein, most 42.2% (38) of the youths, 42.2% (38), in North-West are within 26-30 years, 38.9% (35) are within the age of 21-25 years, 14.4% (13) of the youths are 31-35 years while 4.4% (4) are within 15-20 years. Also, a major part 57.8% (52) of the youths in the North-Central are within 26-30 years, 15.6% (14) are within the age of 21-25 years, 14.4% (13) of the youth are 31-35 years while 4.4% (4) are within 15-20 years.

Finally, while examining the educational qualifications, the majority of youths, 57.8% (52), in the South-West are graduates with B.Sc./HND degrees, 26.7% (24) have Masters degrees, 10% (9) have SSCE/OND certificates, while 5.6% (5) of the youth have Ph.D. degrees. Similarly, most of the youths, 41.6% (41), in the South-East have B.Sc./HND degrees, 40% (36) have SSCE/OND certificates, 10% (9) have M.Sc. degrees, while 4.4% (4) have Ph.D. degrees. In the same vein, 63.3% (57), which represent the majority of the youth in the South-South region, are graduates (B.Sc./HND), 24.4% (22) have SSCE/OND certificates, 8.9% (8) of the youths have Master's degree while 3.3% (3) have Ph.D. degrees. Furthermore, in the North-East, majority 48.9% (44) of the youths have B.Sc./HND certificates, 47.8% (43) have SSCE/OND certificates, 3.3% (3) have Master's degrees and none of the youths is a Ph.D. holder. Also, majority 56.7% (51) of the youth in the North-West region are also graduates, 41.1% (37) are SSCE/OND holders, and 2.2% (2) have Master's degrees, while none have Ph.D. degrees.

Additionally, in the North-Central, 76.7% (69), are also graduates, 14.4% (13) have SSCE/OND certificate, 5.6% (5) have Master's degrees and 3.3% (3) have Ph.D. degrees. This implies that majority of the youths in the geopolitical zones are graduates, which is an indication that the youths are educated and are either university graduates or polytechnic graduates. Notably, youths in the North-Central have more graduates than other regions in this study. However, the South Western youths are more educated than any other region, combining the numbers of graduates, masters and Ph.D. holders. It can also be observed that the North-East youths are the least educated in this study.

Research Question One: What are the forms of media political education contents targeted at the Nigerian youths?

Table 2a: Forms of Political Education Media Contents Targeted at the Nigeria Youths (N=540)

S/N	Items	Yes (%)	No (%)
Print			
1	Newspapers	405 (75.0)	135 (25.0)
2	Books	378 (70.0)	162 (30.0)
3	Booklets e.g. INEC, NGO	351 (65.0)	189 (31.7)
4	Magazine	394 (73.2)	146 (26.8)
5	Newsletters e.g. INEC, NGO	378 (70.0)	162 (30.0)
Graphics/Digital Graphics			
6	Billboards	435 (80.5)	105 (19.5)
7	Posters	448 (82.9)	92 (17.1)
8	Fliers	380 (70.3)	160 (29.7)
9	Cartoons	342 (63.4)	198 (36.6)
10	Van Display	408 (75.6)	132 (24.4)
Electronics/Broadcast			
11	Television	501 (92.7)	39 (7.3)
12	Radio	487 (90.2)	53 (9.8)
13	Music	448 (82.9)	92 (17.1)
14	Cinema	198 (36.6)	342 (63.4)
15	Audio Outside broadcast	369 (68.3)	171 (31.7)

Table 2b: Forms of Political Education Media Contents

S/N	Items	Yes (%)	No (%)
Digital Media			
16	SMS	290 (53.7)	250 (46.3)
17	Digital billboards	421 (78)	119 (22)
18	Web Pages	448 (82.9)	92 (17.1)
19	Blogs	461 (85.4)	79 (14.6)
Social Media			
20	<i>Facebook</i>	514 (95.1)	26 (4.9)
21	<i>X</i>	461 (85.4)	79 (14.6)
22	<i>WhatsApp</i>	487 (90.2)	53 (9.8)
23	<i>Instagram</i>	474 (87.8)	66 (12.2)
24	<i>Telegram</i>	237 (43.9)	303 (56.1)

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 2 (a) and Table (b) show the various forms of media used for political education contents targeted at the Nigerian youths across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The majority of the youths opined that they have accessed/seen political education contents through the following media: print media (newspapers, books, booklets, magazines, and newsletters); graphics/digital graphics (billboards, posters, fliers, cartoons, and van displays); electronics/broadcast (television, radio, music, and audio outside broadcasts). However, it is worth noting that 343 (63.4%) of respondents opined that they have not accessed/seen political education contents via cinema in the electronics/broadcast category. Furthermore, the majority of youths opined that they have accessed/seen political education media contents via digital media (SMS, digital billboards, web pages, blogs); social media (*Facebook*, *X* and *WhatsApp*), while a significant number have not accessed/seen political education media contents via *Telegram*.

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that youths have accessed/seen political education contents more frequently on social media than any other media, with *Facebook* being the most popular platform (95.1%). Additionally, a substantial number have also accessed/seen political educational contents through television (92.7%) surpassing radio. Overall, 435 (80.5%) of the entire population accessed political educational contents on social media, 405 (75%) accessed it via digital media, 403 (74.5%) accessed it through graphics/digital graphics, 400 (74.1%) accessed it via electronics/broadcast, while 338 (62.64%) youths have accessed/seen political education contents via print media.

Research Two: What is the attitude of Nigerian youths towards political activities?

Table 3a: Attitudes of Nigerian Youths towards Political Activities (N=540)

No	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	M	St.D	Remarks
1	I have the ability to influence politics in my State	132 (24.4)	263 (48.8)	132 (24.4)	13 (2.4)	2.95	0.77	<i>Agree (Good)</i>
2	I have the ability to make politics better in my State	156 (28.8)	324 (60)	60 (11.2)	0 (0)	3.15	0.61	<i>Agree (Good)</i>
3	I have interest in the politics of my State	132 (24.4)	198 (36.6)	184 (34.1)	26 (4.9)	2.80	0.87	<i>Agree (Good)</i>
4	I am politically conscious of my State	119 (22)	301 (56)	119 (22)	0 (0)	2.78	1.04	<i>Agree (Good)</i>
5	I trust in the political activities in my State	53 (9.8)	171 (31.7)	250 (46.3)	66 (12.2)	2.39	0.83	<i>Disagree (Bad)</i>

Table 3b: Attitudes of Nigerian Youths towards Political Activities (N=540)

No	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	M	St.D	Remarks
6	Political activities of parties in my State are acceptable to me	39 (7.3)	211 (39)	237 (43.9)	53 (9.8)	2.37	0.78	<i>Disagree (Bad)</i>
7	Personalities in politics of my State are acceptable to me	53 (9.8)	198 (36.6)	211 (39)	78 (14.6)	2.40	0.87	<i>Disagree (Bad)</i>
8	I have sympathy for politicians and political actors in my state	39 (7.3)	158 (29.3)	277 (51.2)	66 (12.2)	2.42	0.80	<i>Disagree (Bad)</i>
9	I am apathetic about political activities in my State	66 (12.2)	303 (56.1)	158 (29.3)	13 (2.4)	2.78	0.69	<i>Agree (Good)</i>
10	I hate anything politics in my State	66 (12.2)	132 (24.4)	237 (43.9)	105 (19.5)	2.29	0.93	<i>Disagree (Bad)</i>
11	I am biased when it comes to politics in my State	78 (14.6)	119 (22)	224 (41.5)	119 (22)	2.29	0.98	<i>Disagree (Bad)</i>
12	I have the ability to influence politics in Nigeria	158 (29.3)	185 (34.1)	158 (29.3)	39 (7.3)	2.85	0.94	<i>Agree (Good)</i>
13	I have the ability to make politics better in Nigeria	171 (31.7)	263 (48.8)	79 (14.6)	27 (4.9)	3.07	0.82	<i>Agree (Good)</i>
14	I have interest in the politics of Nigeria	171 (31.7)	171 (31.7)	185 (34.1)	14 (2.5)	2.93	0.88	<i>Agree (Good)</i>
15	I am politically conscious of Nigeria	171 (31.7)	277 (51.2)	66 (12.2)	26 (4.9)	3.10	0.80	<i>Agree (Good)</i>

Table 3c: Attitudes of Nigerian Youths towards Political Activities (N=540)

No	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	M	St. D	Remarks
16	I trust in the political activities in Nigeria	105 (19.5)	119 (22)	211 (39)	105 (19.5)	2.41	1.02	<i>Disagree (Bad)</i>
17	Political activities of parties in Nigeria are acceptable to me	92 (17.1)	145 (26.8)	184 (34.1)	119 (22)	2.30	1.03	<i>Disagree (Bad)</i>
18	Personalities in politics in Nigeria are acceptable to me	92 (17.1)	66 (12.2)	198 (36.6)	184 (34.1)	2.20	0.92	<i>Disagree (Bad)</i>
19	I have sympathy for politicians and political actors in Nigeria	79 (14.6)	66 (12.2)	211 (39)	184 (34.1)	2.29	0.80	<i>Disagree (Bad)</i>
20	I am apathetic about political activities in Nigeria	66 (12.2)	198 (36.6)	224 (41.5)	52 (9.7)	2.51	0.84	<i>Agree (Good)</i>
21	I hate anything politics in Nigeria	79 (14.6)	119 (22)	237 (43.9)	105 (19.5)	2.32	0.96	<i>Disagree (Bad)</i>
22	I am biased when it comes to politics in Nigeria	79 (14.6)	132 (24.4)	237 (43.9)	92 (17.1)	2.37	0.94	<i>Disagree (Bad)</i>
Weighted Mean = 2.56; S.D = 0.87; Overall Decision = Agree (Good)								

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Key: SA = Strongly Agree (4), A = Agree (3), D = Disagree (2) and SD = Strongly Disagree (1); S.D = Standard Deviation

*****Threshold:** mean value of 0.000-1.499 = Strongly Disagree (Very Bad); 1.500-2.499 = Disagree (Bad); 2.500-3.499 = Agree (Good); 3.500 to 4.500 = Strongly Agree (Very Good)

Table 3 (a), Table 3 (b) and Table 3 (c) present the attitudes of Nigerian youths towards political activities. The rating scale of ‘Strongly Disagree (1)’ to ‘Strongly Agree (4)’ was used and twenty-two (22) items were used to access their attitudes. From the Table, twelve (12) items were remarked each for "Disagree,"

while ten (10) items were remarked “Agree.” The items remarked “Disagree” imply that a majority of the respondents disagreed with statements such as “I trust in the political activities in my state,” “political activities of parties in my state are acceptable to me,” “personalities in politics of my state are acceptable to me,” “I have sympathy for politicians and political actors in my state,” “I hate anything politics in my state,” “I am biased when it comes to politics in my state,” “I trust in the political activities in Nigeria,” “political activities of parties in Nigeria are acceptable to me,” “personalities in politics in Nigeria are acceptable to me,” “I have sympathy for politicians and political actors in Nigeria”, “I hate anything politics in Nigeria” and “I am biased when it comes to politics in Nigeria.”

The items remarked “Agree” implies that the majority of the youths agreed that they have “the ability to influence politics in their state”, “have the ability to make politics better in their State state,” “have interest in the politics of their state, politically conscious of their state”, “are pathetic about political activities in their state,” “have the ability to influence politics in Nigeria, have the ability to make politics better in Nigeria,” “have interest in the politics of Nigeria, politically conscious of Nigeria and are apathetic about political activities in Nigeria.”

Thus, Table 3 revealed that Nigerian youths generally have a positive attitude towards political attitude towards political activities but hold less favourable attitudes towards political actors and activities, both at the state and national levels.

Testing of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between media education contents and attitudes of Nigerian youths towards political activities.

Table 4: Relationship between Media Education Contents and Attitudes of Nigerian Youths towards Political Activities.

		Media Education	Attitude of Youth
Media Education	Pearson Correlation	1	.861**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	540	540
Attitude of Youth	Pearson Correlation	.861**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	540	540

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Similarly, to assess the relationship between media education contents and the attitudes of Nigerian youths towards political activities, Pearson Correlation was also used with a two-tailed test of significance at P<0.01 level. Table 4.8 shows a significant relationship between media education contents and the

attitudes of Nigerian youths towards political activities. Using default 5% significance level, the p-value or Sig. value is 0.00, which is less than the p-value and significant at the $p < 0.01$ level (2-tailed). The sample correlation is 0.861 (media education contents correlate with the attitudes of Nigerian youths towards political activities at 0.861), indicating a high and positive relationship. This implies that as a unit rise in education content will lead to an increase in the attitudes of Nigerian youths towards political activities by 0.861.

Therefore, the study rejects the null hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between media education contents and the attitudes of Nigerian youths towards political activities.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question One: What are the forms of media political education contents targeted at the Nigerian youths?

Findings from research question one indicate that the majority of the respondents, 435 (80.2%), accessed political education contents through social media, 405 respondents (75%) accessed such content via digital media, 403 respondents (74.5%) accessed through graphics/digital graphics, 74.14% (400) accessed via electronics/broadcast, while 62.64% (338) of the respondents accessed political education via print media. It's worth noting that a significant number, 343 (63.4%) and 303 (56.1%), of the respondents had not accessed or seen political education content through cinema. Therefore, it can be seen that majority of the youths have accessed/seen various forms of political education contents through different media platforms, excluding cinema and *Telegram*.

These findings align with previous findings that reported the widespread use of media platforms such as *Facebook*, *WhatsApp*, *Instagram*, *X*, *Yahoo Messenger*, *Youtube* and *Google+* were widely used social media for political participation among youths¹. The findings are also in line with a related study on "Use of Social Media for Knowledge Sharing among Students," which revealed a significant relationship between social influence and attitude towards using social media for knowledge sharing, as well as significant relationship between attitude and the use of social media for knowledge sharing (Olubumi, 2018). However, these findings contrast with a previous observation that which stated that "today's young people spend most of their time surfing the internet and watching television, but very few of them read newspapers." The findings of the study also revealed that substantial portion of the youths, 405 (75%), have accessed/seen political education contents through newspapers due to their newspaper-reading habits (Erubami, Bebenimibo & Ohaja, 2021).

Research Question Two: What is the attitude of Nigerian youths towards political activities?

The study's research findings revealed that the majority of respondents agreed with various statements, indicating their belief in their ability to influence politics at both the state and national levels in Nigeria. They also expressed confidence in their capacity to contribute to the improvement of politics in their state, demonstrated a vested interest in the politics of both their state and the nation, exhibited political consciousness about their state, and showcased elements of political apathy.

Additionally, respondents indicated their belief in their ability to positively impact politics in Nigeria, their political consciousness concerning the nation, and their apathy toward political activities within the country.

On the other hand, most respondents disagreed with statements about trusting political activities in their states and Nigeria as a nation, finding political activities of parties acceptable, accepting personalities in state and national politics, feeling sympathy for politicians, disliking anything related to politics,

displaying bias in political matters, and finding political activities of parties in Nigeria acceptable. Thus, it can be said that Nigerian youths believe they can influence political activities at the state level and in Nigeria at large. They believe they can improve politics because they have an interest in politics and are conscious of Nigeria's political dynamics.

However, the youths are apathetic about political activities in Nigeria and do not have sympathy for politicians and political actors, as they do not trust political activities and personalities that resonate with them. Furthermore, youths dislike the way politics is played, and they are biased when it comes to politics, as parties' activities are not acceptable to them. The attitude of Nigerian youths towards political activities is positive (with Weighted Mean = 2.56; S.D = 0.87).

These findings align with a study on the attitude of university students towards selected democratic values in Nigeria, which indicated positive attitudes towards all selected democratic values among university students (Obiagu, Machie & Ndubuisi, 2023). However, a study on political socialisation as a correlates of youths' political attitude in Ekiti State, Nigeria, opposed the findings of this study, which reported that youths' political attitude differs based on their educational status with education predicting youths' political attitude to a large extent, as youths are not encouraged to participate in democratic processes except when they are financially induced (Adekanmbi, Ajibefun & Ojomo, 2020). However, the findings contradict a study carried out in Croatia, which found that only 10% of young people in Croatia have a significant interest in politics, while 54% of young people in Croatia express a complete lack of interest (Li & Chan, 2017).

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between media education contents and the attitudes of Nigerian youths towards political activities.

The result from hypothesis two shows a significant and positive relationship between media education contents and the attitudes of Nigerian youths towards political activities. The sample correlation is 0.861 (media education contents correlate with attitudes of Nigerian youths towards political activities at 0.861), indicating a high relationship. This implies that a unit rise in education contents will lead to an increase in attitudes of Nigerian youths towards political activities by 0.861. These findings uphold a study that revealed that exposure to the media had a significant influence on respondents' political behaviour. The calculated t-value of 2.365 was found to be significantly higher than the critical t-value of 1.960 at 4226 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. The study also revealed that television was the most dominant source of political information among the respondents and exposure to the electronic media (radio, television and the Internet) predicted higher levels of political knowledge and behaviour among respondents (Olubumi, 2018).

Also, the findings confirmed a study that examined the influence of newspaper reports on the extent of political apathy among young people in Southeast Nigeria. It stated that "reading newspaper political stories neither causes political alienation nor cynicism but tends to stimulate interest in politics and stir up the belief in the power of the masses to cause consequential political changes. More so, the study extends the frontiers of current knowledge on youths' civic engagement by demonstrating a relatively low level of political apathy among youths on issues relating to passive political involvement, such as engagement in political discussions or intention to vote in future elections" (Erubami, Bebenimibo & Ohaja, 2021).

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The primary objective of this research work was to examine the relationship between media-based educational contents and Nigerian youths' knowledge, attitude and participation in political activities. The study successfully achieved its three objectives, providing clear, reliable, rigorous, and unambiguous answers to the research questions and hypothesis. Based on the research findings, the following conclusions have been drawn:

To this end, in the case of the study, youths in Nigeria have been exposed to different forms of political education contents through most of the media platforms examined in this study, except for *Cinema* and *Telegram*. In addition, Nigerian youths demonstrated a belief in their ability to influence political activities at both state and national levels. They express a commitment to improving politics due to their political awareness and interest in Nigerian affairs.

Furthermore, this study revealed that Nigerian youths exhibit apathy towards political activities and do not express sympathy for politicians and political figures. They harbor a notable lack of trust in political processes and personalities, which is a matter of concern. Notably, an increase in educational content exposure is associated with a 0.861 increase in positive attitudes among Nigerian youths towards political activities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. To enhance political education targeted at youths, government agencies and non-government organisations should leverage various media platforms such as *Facebook*, *X*, *WhatsApp*, digital media, SMS, digital billboards, web pages, blogs, television and radio, as this study has proved that Nigerian youths mostly access political education contents through these channels.
2. Although Nigerian youths exhibit a positive attitude towards political activities in general, their perception of political actors and activities at both the state and federal levels is less positive. To address this, political stakeholders should prioritise efforts to cultivate youths' interest in political activities and promoting the acceptance of political actors.
3. As established by the study, an increase in education contents has the potential to improve the positive attitude of Nigerian youths towards political activities. Hence, political stakeholders should capitalise on the opportunities presented by the media to change the apathetic, prejudicial and hostile attitudes of youths towards political actors and activities into trust, acceptance, cooperation and support.

Contribution to Knowledge

The dataset collected in this study has significantly contributed to the existing body of knowledge in the field of political communication and youths' participation in politics, especially in the context of Nigeria. It places a strong emphasis on the role of media education contents in fostering positive attitudes towards political activities. Hence, this study has enriched the literature by bridging this particular gap. It would also serve as a valuable reference point for future researchers interested in exploring further aspects of media education.

Furthermore, this study has validated and reinforced the relevance Cognitive Engagement Theory, aligning its findings with the theory's assumption. The findings showed that youths are exposed to media education contents on politics, indicating that the media ~~is~~ plays a crucial role in setting agendas and fulfilling its social responsibility of educating the youths.

The research instrument, specifically the questionnaire designed and validated for this study, holds immense value for future researchers and students conducting similar studies. From a practical standpoint, the findings of this study provide insights into the significance of media education and shed light on the attitudes of youths towards political activities. It has also showed the relationships between the variables. This valuable information would help political stakeholders to know how to use the media and selecting forms to use to engage youths on political issues.

From a policy perspective, the study has provided policy makers with firsthand and valuable data for planning and formulating policies related to media education and attitudes of youths towards political activities both at the state and federal levels.

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