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The Role of Youth in Representation in Policy Making In Yobe State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study explores the role of youth representation in policymaking in Yobe State, Nigeria, a region characterized by significant youth demographics and socio-economic challenges. Recognizing the critical importance of youth in shaping effective governance and sustainable development, this research aims to assess the current levels of youth participation in policy processes, identify barriers hindering their involvement, and analyze their perceptions of agency and impact within political frameworks. Employing a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through surveys and semi-structured interviews involving youth representatives, policymakers, and community leaders. The findings reveal that while youth constitute a substantial portion of the population, their representation in decision-making roles remains disproportionately low. Barriers such as limited political awareness, socio-economic constraints, and systemic exclusion significantly hinder youth engagement in policymaking processes. Participants expressed a desire for greater involvement and emphasized the potential benefits of inclusive governance, including innovative solutions to pressing local issues. This study highlights the urgent need for policy interventions that promote youth engagement in governance, suggesting strategies for enhancing representation, offering capacity-building initiatives, and fostering partnerships between youth organizations and government bodies. Ultimately, this research contributes to the understanding of youth dynamics in governance within Yobe State and aims to inform stakeholders about the necessity of integrating youth perspectives into policymaking for more inclusive and effective governance.

Keywords: youth representation, policymaking, Yobe State, Nigeria, governance, youth empowerment.

Introduction

The Nigerian government has recognized the importance of youth involvement in governance, enshrining youth empowerment and representation within various national policies, including the National Youth Policy (Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, 2019). Despite these initiatives, the actual implementation of these policies often falls short, particularly at the state level. In Yobe State, limited access to political platforms, compounded by socio-

political instability and economic deprivation, has led to a pervasive sense of disenfranchisement among the youth (Suleiman et al., 2020).

The lack of youth representation in decision-making bodies can stifle innovative ideas and solutions that young people can offer, particularly in areas such as education, health, and economic development. Moreover, the political landscape in Yobe has been marred by a patriarchal system that often sidelines the voice of youth, thereby perpetuating policies that do not

adequately reflect their needs and aspirations (Abdullahi & Ahmad, 2022).

Recent research highlights the need to understand the barriers to youth participation in policymaking better. Factors such as political apathy, lack of mentorship, and insufficient platforms for engagement contribute to the limited efficacy of youth participation (Mohammed et al., 2023). To foster a more inclusive governance structure, it is essential to engage youth effectively and ensure their voices are included in the policymaking processes that directly affect them.

This study aims to investigate the current state of youth representation in policymaking in Yobe State and identify the barriers that hinder effective participation. By providing insights into the perceptions and experiences of young people in governance, this research aspires to contribute to the dialogue on enhancing youth representation in Nigeria's political landscape.

Statement of the Problem

Youth in Nigeria, particularly in Yobe State, constitute a significant demographic with the potential to influence social, political, and economic landscapes. However, despite their numbers and potential contributions, effective representation of youth in policymaking remains critically low. This scenario presents several interconnected challenges.

There is a pronounced limitation on youth participation in decision-

making processes. Systemic barriers restrict their involvement in formal political structures. These barriers include a lack of access to political channels, insufficient awareness of their rights and responsibilities, and inadequate opportunities for mentorship and leadership development. Consequently, policies and programs often overlook the unique needs and perspectives of young people, resulting in a disconnect between governance and the population it aims to serve.

Additionally, Yobe State grapples with high levels of unemployment, poverty, and insecurity, conditions that disproportionately affect the youth. The absence of youth-focused policies exacerbates these challenges, creating a cycle of disenfranchisement and exclusion. When young people are not actively engaged in policymaking, the initiatives designed to address these pressing issues often lack effectiveness and relevance.

Many young individuals in Yobe perceive themselves as having limited agency within the political system, which fosters political apathy and disengagement. This perception often stems from historical disenfranchisement and cultural norms that prioritize older generations in leadership roles. When youth doubt their ability to influence policy outcomes, it diminishes their likelihood of participating in governance.

Moreover, there exists a notable gap in communication between policymakers and youth. Policymaking processes frequently lack mechanisms

for soliciting and integrating youth feedback. This gap leads to a lack of trust in government institutions among young people, hampering effective collaboration and knowledge-sharing that could address the diverse concerns faced by youth.

Finally, the potential of young individuals as agents of change remains underutilized. Young people are capable of bringing innovative ideas and solutions to governance challenges. However, without representation in the policymaking process, their potential contributions to societal development go largely unrecognized. This not only limits the growth of a vibrant civil society but also stifles broader developmental initiatives.

This study aims to address these challenges by investigating the current state of youth representation in policymaking in Yobe State. It seeks to identify barriers to youth participation, gain insights into their perceptions of agency and influence, and recommend strategies to enhance their involvement in governance. Through this investigation, the research aspires to contribute to more effective, inclusive, and representative governance in the region.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the effect of youth inclusivity on youth representation in policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria
2. To determine the effect of systemic barriers on youth participation in policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria

3. To investigate the effect of youths' perceptions about governance on Youth representation in Policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria
4. To determine the effect of youth educational attainment on youth representation in Policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant effect of youth inclusivity on youth representation in policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria.
2. Systemic barriers have no significant effect on youth participation in policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria
3. Youths' perceptions about governance have no significant effect on Youth representation in policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria.
4. Youth educational attainment has no significant effect on youth representation in policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria

Literature review

Defining Youth Representation in the Context of Governance

Youth representation in governance refers to the active involvement and participation of young people in decision-making processes that affect their lives and communities. It encompasses not only the inclusion of youth in formal political structures, such as legislative bodies and government agencies, but also their engagement in policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. Youth representation is

essential for ensuring that the voices and perspectives of younger generations are considered in governance frameworks, which ultimately impacts the effectiveness of policies aimed at addressing youth-related issues (United Nations, 2018),

The Importance of Youth Engagement in Democratic Processes

Youth engagement in democratic processes is vital for fostering vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable democracies. As one of the largest demographic groups in many nations, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria, young people possess unique perspectives, innovative ideas, and the potential to bring about meaningful change in governance. Their active participation not only strengthens democratic institutions but also ensures that the political system reflects the voices and needs of all citizens.

One of the primary benefits of youth engagement is the infusion of fresh ideas into policymaking. Research by Mbowuri and Okwu (2023) highlights how young people often challenge conventional thinking and bring innovative solutions to pressing societal issues. This is particularly significant in areas such as technology, social justice, and environmental sustainability, where youth-led initiatives have demonstrated the ability to drive transformative change. Engaging youth in democratic processes integrates their creative potential into policy formulation, fostering responsiveness and adaptability in governance.

Historical Context of Youth Participation in Nigeria

Youth participation in Nigeria's political landscape has evolved significantly over the years, influenced by historical events, socio-economic factors, and emerging political dynamics. Historically, Nigerian youth have played pivotal roles in shaping the nation's governance and advocating for social change, particularly during periods of political upheaval and transition.

In the pre-independence era, Nigerian youth were actively involved in the struggle for self-governance and independence from colonial rule. Organizations such as the Nigerian Union of Students, founded in the late 1940s, became platforms for mobilizing young people to engage in nationalist movements advocating for political rights and representation (Ogundipe, 2022). The emergence of political awareness among youth during this era laid the foundation for their ongoing engagement in governance.

Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, youth participation continued to grow, particularly during times of political instability and military regimes. The 1966 coup d'état that led to a series of military regimes sparked widespread student activism, as young people rallied against military rule and advocated for democratic governance. The "Ali Must Go" protest in 1978, where students mobilized against poor educational policies and rising fees, is a key milestone that illustrated the capacity of youth to influence political discourse

and demand accountability from the government (Akinwunmi, 2021).

Challenges to Youth Participation in Policymaking

Youth involvement in policymaking is crucial for ensuring that the perspectives and needs of younger generations are reflected in government decisions. However, several significant obstacles hinder youth participation in this essential democratic process. These challenges can be broadly categorized into socio-economic, political, and societal barriers.

Socio-Economic Barriers

One of the most significant challenges facing youth participation in policymaking is socio-economic disadvantage. Many young people in Nigeria experience high levels of poverty and unemployment, which limit their ability to engage in political processes. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2022), youth unemployment rates in Nigeria remain alarmingly high, contributing to a general sense of disenfranchisement among young people. This economic strain often forces youth to prioritize immediate financial survival over civic engagement, reducing their involvement in political activities and decision-making processes (Mohammed et al., 2023).

Political Barriers

Political barriers significantly impede youth involvement in policymaking. One of the main issues is the lack of access to political platforms

where young voices can be heard. Although some youth organizations exist, many young people still struggle to find legitimate channels for participation in governance (Abdullahi & Ahmad, 2022). This lack of access is often compounded by age discrimination within political structures, where older generations dominate leadership roles, sidelining the contributions and interests of younger citizens (Ejim & Chidubem, 2023).

Societal Barriers

Societal barriers rooted in cultural perceptions and norms also play a crucial role in hindering youth participation in governance. In many Nigerian communities, cultural attitudes may prioritize the involvement of older individuals in leadership roles, often viewing young people as inexperienced or unqualified to contribute to significant decisions (Yusuf, 2023). Such societal norms can discourage young individuals from asserting themselves in political discourse, perpetuating a system where their voices remain marginalized.

Youth Agency and Perception of Influence

Youth agency refers to the capacity of young individuals to act independently and make their own choices within the political system. This concept is particularly important in understanding how young people perceive their influence on political processes and governance. In many contexts, including Nigeria, the interplay between youth agency and their perception of influence can significantly

impact their willingness to engage in political activities.

Perception of Agency within the Political System

Young people often face a complex relationship with authority and formal political structures. Many youths perceive themselves as marginalized within the political discourse, feeling that their voices are not adequately represented. Research by Ogunleye and Alabi (2021) highlights that a significant number of young Nigerians express feelings of disenfranchisement and frustration due to the lack of opportunities to participate meaningfully in governance. This perception can lead to a sense of political apathy, as many young individuals begin to view political engagement as futile.

Relationship between Youth Empowerment and Engagement in Governance

The literature consistently indicates that youth empowerment correlates positively with engagement in governance. Empowerment strategies that enhance the skills, knowledge, and confidence of young people play a crucial role in fostering political participation and active citizenship. Research by Ogbu and Anugwom (2022) emphasizes that when young people are empowered—whether through education, access to resources, or leadership opportunities—they are more likely to engage in political processes and advocate for their rights and interests.

Political efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to influence political decisions, is closely tied to youth empowerment. A study by Okoro and Ofori (2022) found that young people who perceive themselves as empowered exhibit higher levels of political efficacy, which in turn leads to increased participation in governance and civic activities. This empowerment can be achieved through programs that focus on civic education, advocacy training, and mentorship, providing young people with the tools necessary to navigate and impact the political landscape effectively.

Policy Frameworks Supporting Youth Involvement in Yobe State

In Nigeria, various national and state-level policies have been formulated to promote youth participation in governance. These frameworks aim to enhance the political agency of young people, fostering their involvement in decision-making processes. In the context of Yobe State, understanding the effectiveness of these policies is crucial for identifying both their strengths and inherent gaps.

National Policies Promoting Youth Participation

At the national level, the Nigerian government has established several policies aimed at empowering youth and increasing their participation in governance. The National Youth Policy (NYP) of 2009, which was revised in 2019, is a key framework. It outlines specific strategies to promote the involvement of young people in

political and civic activities, as well as to address challenges such as unemployment and lack of access to education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2019). Another important initiative is the National Social Investment Program (NSIP), which includes interventions that aim to empower youth through skills acquisition and entrepreneurship development (Okuneye et al., 2021).

State-Level Policies in Yobe State

In Yobe State, the government has launched various programs to encourage youth participation, including the Yobe State Youth Development Policy, which focuses on providing leadership training, mentorship opportunities, and support for youth-led initiatives. This policy seeks to create an enabling environment for youths to engage in governance actively.

Nonetheless, despite these efforts, the effectiveness of the Yobe State Youth Development Policy has been questionable. A study by Shehu and Ojo (2023) highlights that while the policy outlines noble objectives; its implementation is hampered by limited funding, lack of infrastructural support, and insufficient awareness among the youth. Many young people in Yobe do not have adequate access to the resources and platforms needed to participate effectively in governance.

Critical Evaluation and Identification of Gaps

While national and state-level policies exist to support youth involvement in governance, several gaps persist in their implementation and

impact. First, there is a lack of comprehensive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of these policies in real-time (Adebayo & Ismail, 2023). Without effective evaluation, it becomes challenging to identify successful initiatives or areas needing improvement.

Second, the political landscape in Yobe State continues to be dominated by older generations, which can limit the opportunities for youth participation (Ogunleye et al., 2021). The influence of traditional power structures often sidelines the voices of the youth, undermining the objectives of policies intended to empower them.

Third, socio-economic factors such as poverty, unemployment, and inadequate education significantly impact young people's capacity to engage in governance. Many youths in Yobe State face daily challenges that divert their attention from political participation, effectively limiting their agency (Mohammed et al., 2023).

Furthermore, societal norms and cultural perceptions regarding authority and leadership often discourage young participation in politics. Cultural beliefs may prioritize the contributions of older individuals, trapping youth in a cycle of exclusion (Ejim & Chidubem, 2023).

The Role of Youth Organizations and Movements in Yobe State

Youth organizations and movements in Yobe State, Nigeria, serve as vital platforms for advocating youth

representation and participation in governance. Given the historical context of marginalization and socio-economic challenges faced by young people in Yobe, these organizations play a critical role in mobilizing youth for political engagement and empowerment.

Impact of Youth Organizations in Advocating for Representation

Youth organizations in Yobe State, such as the Yobe State Youth Development Association and local chapters of national bodies like the National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN), have significantly contributed to advocating for youth interests in governance. These organizations mobilize young people to voice their concerns and provide opportunities for them to participate in decision-making processes. Their activities often include organizing town hall meetings, workshops, and advocacy campaigns to raise awareness about youth issues.

Research by Sadiq and Murtala (2023) indicates that youth organizations in Yobe have actively engaged in lobbying state policymakers to prioritize youth development in governance. For instance, they have been involved in campaigns focused on enhancing educational opportunities and addressing unemployment, ensuring that youth perspectives are considered in the formulation of policies that affect them. These organizations also act as intermediaries, relaying the concerns of young people to government officials and fostering a dialogue around issues such as education, healthcare, and security, which are particularly relevant

in the context of Yobe (Mohammed et al., 2022).

Role of Social Media and Technology in Mobilizing Youth Engagement

The proliferation of social media and mobile technology has transformed the landscape of youth activism and engagement in Yobe State. Platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter are increasingly used by youth to mobilize support, share information, and advocate for political change. Social media has proven to be a powerful tool for raising awareness about crucial issues, often bypassing traditional media channels that may not adequately cover youth-oriented events.

The #EndSARS protests in late 2020 showcased the power of social media as a mobilizing force for youth in Nigeria, including those in Yobe. Research by Idris et al. (2023) emphasizes how social media facilitated coordination among young activists, enabling them to organize protests and campaigns that drew national attention to police brutality and governance issues. These online platforms allow for rapid dissemination of information, grassroots organizing and solidarity-building among youth across geographical boundaries.

Empirical review

Ahmed (2023) assess the current level of youth representation in policy making in Yobe State and explore the impact of youth involvement in policy making on governance and

development. The study used Survey of 300 youth aged 18-35 in Yobe State, Interviews with key policymakers, youth leaders, and civil society representatives and mixed-method approach combining statistical analysis and thematic coding. The study find out that Limited youth representation in key policy-making bodies, Youth involvement positively correlates with more inclusive policies and Challenges include lack of access to decision-making platforms and limited resources for youth engagement. The author recommended that Implement quotas for youth representation in government committees, create youth-friendly policy dialogues and platforms for meaningful participation and provide capacity-building programs to enhance youth engagement in policy making. While the study focused on youth perceptions and experiences, further research is needed to investigate the actual impact of youth-informed policies on the ground and to assess the long-term sustainability of youth-led initiatives in Yobe State.

Ibrahim (2024) analyze the effectiveness of existing youth policies in Yobe State and investigate the perceptions of policymakers towards youth participation in policy making. The study used Review of existing youth policies and strategies in Yobe State, Engagements with policymakers, youth representatives, and community leaders, Examination of successful youth-led policy initiatives. And assessing the use of technology for youth involvement in policy making. The author find out that Existing youth policies lack clear mechanisms for youth participation and Policymakers express varying levels of support for youth involvement in

decision-making processes and recommended that Revise existing youth policies to incorporate specific provisions for youth participation and Conduct capacity-building workshops for policymakers on the importance of youth inclusion. Further research is needed to explore the intersection of gender and youth representation in policy making in Yobe State and to assess the sustainability of technology-driven youth engagement strategies over time.

Abdullahi (2024) examine the current level of youth representation in policy making at the national level and assess the impact of youth participation on the effectiveness of policies. The study used Survey a Sampling 500 youth across diverse regions, In-depth discussions with policymakers, youth leaders, and civil society representatives and Examination of recent policies to evaluate youth inclusion. The study find out that Youth representation in policy making is limited, with significant disparities across regions and Policies with youth input tend to be more relevant and impactful. The author recommends that Establish formal mechanisms for youth inclusion in policy-making bodies, and Provide training and capacity-building programs for youth interested in policy engagement While the study provides insights into the challenges of youth representation in policy making, further research is needed to explore the intersectionality of youth identities (such as gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic background) in influencing their participation and impact on policy outcomes.

Theories of the study

A robust theoretical framework is essential for analyzing youth participation in governance, particularly within the context of Yobe State, Nigeria. This framework will draw on Youth Empowerment Theory and Participation Theory, which together provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing youth engagement and the dynamics of their political participation.

Youth Empowerment Theory

Youth Empowerment Theory posits that the empowerment of young individuals is fundamental for fostering their active participation in social, political, and economic spheres. Empowerment involves equipping youth with the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes affecting their lives (Snyder & McLaughlin, 2020). This theory emphasizes the importance of providing youth with access to resources, education, and mentorship, enabling them to navigate the complexities of governance and advocacy.

In the Nigerian context, particularly in Yobe State, youth empowerment is critical given the socio-economic challenges and historical marginalization that young people face. Empowerment initiatives can include leadership training, capacity-building workshops, and access to information about political processes. According to Adekoya and Ajayi (2022), empowerment programs have the

potential to cultivate a sense of agency among youth, motivating them to engage actively in political activities and advocate for their rights.

Youth Empowerment Theory aligns closely with the notion of resilience, as empowered youth are more likely to advocate for change and challenge systemic barriers that limit their participation. This theory serves as a guiding framework for examining the strategies implemented by youth organizations in Yobe State to enhance youth involvement in governance and ensure that young voices are represented in decision-making processes.

Participation Theory

Participation Theory provides insights into the mechanisms through which individuals engage in political processes and influence governance. This theory posits that active participation in governance is not only a right but also a necessary element of democratic citizenship. It emphasizes the importance of inclusivity, representation, and the opportunity for marginalized groups, including youth, to have their voices heard in political discussions (Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, 1995).

In Yobe State, Participation Theory is particularly relevant given the historical context of youth disenfranchisement. The theory highlights the barriers to participation that young people may encounter, such as limited access to political platforms, socio-cultural norms that prioritize older generations, and economic constraints

(Adebayo & Ismail, 2023). These barriers can result in apathy and disengagement from the political process.

Methodology

In this study, the research design adopted was quantitative causal design. The research design adopted explained the effect of youth inclusivity systemic barriers, youths' perceptions about governance and youth educational attainment on youth representation in policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria.

Population and Sample

The population of this study is unknown; thus, an unknown sample size determination formula was applied. The sample size of this study was determined by using the formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{z^2[p*q]}{d^2}$$

Where:

n = Sample size required

p = proportion of 0.5

q = proportion of 0.5

d = Level of significance (0.05) i.e. allowable error

$$\text{Thus } n = \frac{1.96*1.96[0.5*0.5]}{0.05*0.05}$$

$$= 384.16$$

$$\therefore n = 384 \text{ (rounded).}$$

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

The instrument for data collection in this study was questionnaire using a cross-sectional data from primary sources. The nature of the questionnaire used for this study

was a five-point Likert-scale, ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” (5 = ‘Strongly Agree’, 4 = ‘Agree’, 3 = ‘Undecided’, 2 = ‘Disagree’ and 1 = ‘Strongly Disagree’) to reflect the agreement of the respondents on the issues raised. Tests of validity and reliability were conducted to confirm the suitability of the instrument. The data collected were analysed with SPSS version 26.0, by applying multiple linear regression.

Model Specification

The multiple regression equation is:

$$YREP_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 YIN1_i + \beta_2 SYSB2_i + \beta_3 YOP3_i + \beta_4 YEA4_i + \epsilon_i$$

Where;

$YREP$ = youth representation in policymaking

$YIN1_i$ = youth inclusivity

$SYSB2_i$ = Systemic barriers

$YOP3_i$ = Youths' perceptions about governance

$YEA 4_i$ = Youth educational attainment

B_0 = Constant or intercept

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \text{ and } \beta_4$ = Coefficients of the independent variables

ϵ_i = Error term

Decision Rule

The decision rule is:

Reject H_0 - H_05 if p value < 0.05 , otherwise

Accept H_0 - H_05

Results and Discussion

Response Rate

A total of three hundred and eighty-four (384) copies of the questionnaire were administered, 271 questionnaires were completed and returned for analysis, giving a response rate of 70.6%.

Pre-Estimation Tests

The data for this study was subjected to data cleaning tests (missing

values, out of range and reliability) and certified for the final analysis. The result showed that there are no out-of-range values. This means that all the value range for this study is within 1-5. No value was found outside the 1-5 range. Missing values were detected in the

result. The percentage of missing value was (0.4%) since the percentage of missing values is less than twenty percent (20%) as indicated by Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson and Tatham (2006) and Scheffer (2002), does not pose a challenge to the analysis of data.

Table 1: Reliability Result

SN	Questionnaire Constructs	Cronbach Alpha	Remark
		Reliability Result	
1	Youth inclusivity	0.918	Reliable
2	Systemic barriers	0.884	Reliable
3	Youths' perceptions about governance	0.842	Reliable
4	Youth educational attainment	0.880	Reliable
5.	youth representation	0.542	Moderately Reliable
6	Overall	0.950	Reliable

Source: SPSS 26.0

The reliability test indicated that since the overall Cronbach Alpha value is 0.950 and is higher than the

benchmark value of 0.7, it can be indicated that the instrument for data collection is reliable.

Table 2: Regression estimates

	<i>Regression result</i>	
	<i>Coeff</i>	<i>P-value</i>
Constant	2.558	0.000**
YIN	0.051	0.197
SYSB	0.111	0.005**
YOP	-0.089	0.121
YEA	0.366	0.000**
r²	0.493	
N	271	
F*	64.515	0.000***
Normality	Symmetrically	
Multi-collinearity (VIF)	2.548, 2.398, 2.997 and 2.820	
Durbin-Watson	1.923	

Dependent Variables **YREPi** *** significant at 1%

Source: SPSS output 26.0

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of youth inclusivity on youth representation in policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria.

From the result of the P-value of youth inclusivity is 0.197. The decision rule which states that when the p-value is greater than the level of significant 0.05, the null hypothesis should be rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Thus, there is no significant effect of youth inclusivity on youth representation in policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: Systemic barriers have no significant effect on youth participation in policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria.

The result of the P-value for Systemic barriers is 0.005. The decision rule which states that when the p-value is less than the level of significant 0.05, the null hypothesis should be rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. The p-value is less than 0.05, hence, Systemic barriers have a significant effect on youth participation in policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: Youths' perceptions about governance have no significant effect on Youth representation in policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria.

The P-value for Youths' perceptions about governance is 0.121. Given that the p-value is greater than 0.05, therefore, Youths' perceptions about governance have no significant effect on Youth representation in policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Four

H₀₄: Youth educational attainment has no significant effect on youth representation in policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria.

The P-value for Youth educational attainment is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, accordingly, it is concluded that Youth educational attainment has a significant effect on youth representation in policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

From hypothesis one, it found that there is no significant effect of youth inclusivity on youth representation in policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria. This result is consistent with the findings of Ahmed (2023) who assessed the current level of youth representation in policy making in Yobe State and explore the impact of youth involvement in policy making on governance and development. The study found that limited youth representation in key policy-making bodies, Youth involvement positively correlates with more inclusive policies. The findings of this study does not support the theory of participation. Participation theory emphasizes the importance of inclusivity, representation, and the opportunity for

marginalized groups, including youth, to have their voices heard in political discussions.

For hypothesis two, it found that Systemic barriers have a significant effect on youth participation in policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria. This result is in agreement with the findings of Abdullahi (2024) who examined the current level of youth representation in policy making at the national level and assess the impact of youth participation on the effectiveness of policies. The study revealed that Youth representation in policy making is limited, with significant disparities across regions and policies with youth input tend to be more relevant and impactful. The findings of this study do not support the theory of participation. Participation theory emphasizes the importance of inclusivity, representation, and the opportunity for marginalized groups, including youth, to have their voices heard in political discussions.

From hypothesis three, it found that Youths' perceptions about governance have no significant effect on Youth representation in policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria. This finding is supported by the study of Musa (2024) who analyzed the effectiveness of existing youth policies in Yobe State and investigate the perceptions of policymakers towards youth participation in policy making. The study found that existing youth policies lack clear mechanisms for youth participation and Policymakers express varying levels of support for youth involvement in decision-making processes. The result does not support

the youth empowerment theory. The theory stated that the empowerment of young individuals is fundamental for fostering their active participation in social, political, and economic spheres. This theory emphasizes the importance of providing youth with access to resources, education, and mentorship, enabling them to navigate the complexities of governance and advocacy.

For hypothesis four, Youth educational attainment has a significant effect on youth representation in policymaking in Yobe state, Nigeria. This result is consistent with the findings of Ahmed (2023) and it also supported the youth empowerment theory. The theory stated that the empowerment of young individuals is fundamental for fostering their active participation in social, political, and economic spheres. This theory emphasizes the importance of providing youth with access to resources, education, and mentorship, enabling them to navigate the complexities of governance and advocacy.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the role of youth representation in policymaking in Yobe State. The study specifically examined how youth inclusivity, Systemic barriers, Youths' perceptions about governance and Youth educational attainment affect youth representation in policymaking in Yobe state. The result from the regression analysis revealed that Systemic barriers and Youth educational attainment

affect youth representation in policymaking in Yobe state. While, youth inclusivity and Youths' perceptions about governance do not affect Youth representation in policymaking in Yobe state.

The study concluded that there is mixed outcome in theory of participation and youth empowerment theory, as result revealed significant and insignificant outcomes. The study recommended among others that there is need to introduce quotas for youth representation in government committees, create youth-friendly policy dialogues and platforms for meaningful participation and provide capacity-building programs to enhance youth engagement in policy making. Again, insights into the challenges of youth representation in policy making, should be broken such as gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic background.

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