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Assessment of Transformative Political Participation and Attitudinal Perspectives Among Christian Youths in Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined assessment of transformative political participation and attitudinal perspectives among Christian Youths in Kaduna State, Nigeria, adopting a descriptive survey research design. From a population of 2,762,278, a sample of 931 respondents was randomly selected. The self-structured questionnaire was validated by experts in the field and tested for reliability using a pilot study, yielding a high reliability coefficient of 0.69, indicating that the instrument was both valid and dependable for data collection. The results showed that Christian youths engage in transformative politics through activities such as protests, political writing, lobbying, advocacy, debates, and signing electoral petitions. The study concludes that their participation is marked by diverse strategies, a strong sense of civic duty, and a determination to influence governance and policy directions. It recommends that the Kaduna State Government, in partnership with civil society organizations, establish comprehensive Youth Political Engagement and Civic Education programs to equip Christian youths with essential knowledge, skills, and legal awareness for effective political involvement. In addition, church denominations in Kaduna State should integrate civic responsibility and governance education into youth fellowships, seminars, and leadership training initiatives.

Keywords: Christian Youths, Transformative Political Participation, Kaduna State

Introduction

Christian youths occupy a significant demographic and sociopolitical space in Nigeria, representing both an energetic force for change and a group whose political engagement is often shaped by religious and cultural factors. In Kaduna State, where ethno-religious diversity intersects with political competition, the attitudes of Christian youths toward transformative political participation provide critical insights into the prospects for inclusive governance and democratic consolidation. Transformative political participation, in this context, refers to engagement aimed at systemic reform, equity, and the promotion of justice rather than merely partisan involvement (Olanrewaju, 2022). This approach frames political action not only as a civic responsibility but also as a moral and spiritual mandate, especially within faith communities. The influence of Christianity on political attitudes among youths in Nigeria is rooted in biblical teachings on leadership, stewardship, and social justice. Churches in Kaduna State have historically played a role in civic sensitization, peace advocacy, and voter education, often framing political participation as a means to actualize godly governance (Okafor, 2019). However, despite this theological grounding, participation rates among Christian youths in transformative political activities remain inconsistent. Factors such as fear of electoral violence, disillusionment with political elites, and socio-economic instability often deter sustained engagement (Musa, 2021). This paradox between religious motivation and political apathy demands closer scholarly scrutiny.

Kaduna State presents a unique case for studying these attitudes due to its history of ethno-religious conflict, which often spills into electoral processes. In such an environment, political engagement is frequently perceived through a lens of group identity and survival rather than national reform (Abubakar, 2020). For Christian youths, this context can shape attitudes

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toward politics in ways that either encourage defensive participation—focused on protecting communal interests—or inspire reformist action that transcends sectarian divides. Understanding these nuanced attitudes is essential for designing interventions that promote peace-oriented, inclusive political engagement. The role of social media in shaping political consciousness among Christian youths in Kaduna State cannot be overstated. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp serve as spaces for political discourse, mobilization, and advocacy (Eze, 2018). These digital channels allow youths to bypass traditional political gatekeepers, engage in civic campaigns, and disseminate messages that align with transformative political ideals. Yet, while social media can amplify reformist narratives, it also risks deepening polarization if used to reinforce sectarian grievances. The attitudinal outcomes of such digital engagement require empirical exploration to determine whether they foster inclusive political participation or perpetuate division.

Economic realities further influence the attitudes of Christian youths toward transformative politics. High unemployment, underemployment, and economic marginalization can either stimulate activism or foster political disengagement (Yahaya, 2017). In some cases, economic hardship motivates youths to demand systemic change, while in others, it drives them toward short-term, transactional political engagement, such as vote-buying or clientelism. These competing outcomes highlight the complexity of linking economic conditions to political attitudes, especially in a context where religious values also inform decision-making. Gender dynamics also play a role in shaping these attitudes. Female Christian youths in Kaduna State face additional barriers to political participation, including cultural expectations, limited representation in political structures, and gender-based violence during elections (Ojo, 2016). Such challenges can affect how young women perceive transformative politics and their willingness to engage in it. Recognizing the intersection between gender, religion, and political participation is vital for fostering inclusive reform movements that leverage the potential of all youth demographics.

Christian Youths and Transformative Political Participation in Nigeria

Christian youths in Nigeria represent a dynamic and influential segment of the population, possessing both the numbers and the energy to influence the trajectory of the nation's democratic process. Transformative political participation refers to civic engagement that aims at structural reforms, ethical governance, and social justice, rather than mere partisan involvement (Emmanuel, 2021). For Christian youths, this form of participation is often anchored in biblical teachings on justice, stewardship, and the common good. However, while the religious foundation encourages ethical political engagement, socio-political realities frequently complicate the translation of faith into sustained reformist action. Religious institutions in Nigeria play a central role in shaping the political attitudes and behaviour of Christian youths. Churches act as centers for leadership development, civic awareness, and moral instruction, often integrating political themes into sermons, youth seminars, and community outreach programs (Adebayo, 2019). This environment fosters a value-based approach to politics that encourages transparency, accountability, and service. Yet, in some instances, excessive caution from religious leaders—rooted in fears of political reprisals or perceived moral compromise—has inadvertently contributed to political apathy among young believers. The socio-political context of Nigeria, marked by ethnic diversity, religious pluralism, and periodic electoral violence, heavily influences Christian youths' willingness to participate in transformative politics. In conflict-prone regions, political engagement is often approached with caution due to the risks of violence, intimidation, and communal division (Garba, 2018). While some youths respond to these challenges by advocating for peacebuilding and inclusive governance, others retreat from active political participation, preferring to focus on localized church activities and non-confrontational community service.

Economic factors also shape the patterns of political participation among Christian youths. Persistent unemployment, underemployment, and economic inequality have dual effects: for some, these conditions stimulate activism aimed at systemic reform; for others, they create vulnerability to political manipulation through vote-buying and patronage networks (Onyema, 2020). Transformative participation demands not only civic consciousness but also economic empowerment, as financial insecurity often limits the capacity for sustained and principled engagement. Technological advancements, particularly the proliferation of social media, have expanded the avenues through which Christian youths engage in politics. Platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp facilitate grassroots mobilization, civic education, and the promotion of reformist ideals (Okon, 2022). These digital tools have enabled Christian youths to bypass traditional political gatekeepers, amplify their voices, and participate in national conversations. However, the risk of misinformation, online

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harassment, and ideological echo chambers presents challenges to ensuring that digital activism translates into constructive, real-world political change. Gender considerations further complicate the landscape of transformative political participation. Female Christian youths encounter structural and cultural barriers that limit their visibility and influence within political spaces (Balogun, 2017). Discriminatory practices, societal expectations, and gender-based violence during elections hinder their active involvement, often redirecting their engagement toward church-based advocacy and community development projects. Promoting gender equity within political participation frameworks is thus vital for maximizing the potential of all Christian youth demographics. Christian youths in Nigeria possess the moral foundation, demographic strength, and technological tools necessary for transformative political participation. However, the translation of these assets into sustainable reformist engagement requires deliberate efforts to address religious caution, socio-political instability, economic vulnerability, digital risks, and gender inequality (Udeme, 2019). By implementing faith-sensitive civic education, economic empowerment initiatives, and inclusive political structures, Nigeria can harness the transformative potential of Christian youths to advance democratic renewal and social justice.

Christian youths in Kaduna State constitute a significant portion of the population, endowed with the potential to influence democratic governance and drive societal reform. Their participation in transformative politics—defined as political engagement aimed at structural change, justice, and ethical governance—is critical in addressing entrenched challenges such as corruption, electoral malpractice, and socio-political inequality. However, despite the theological and moral imperatives within Christianity that encourage civic responsibility, evidence suggests that many Christian youths remain either politically apathetic or engaged in ways that do not foster long-term reform. This gap between potential and actual political influence raises concerns about the attitudinal factors that shape their participation in transformative political processes. The socio-political realities of Kaduna State present unique challenges that may hinder Christian youths' engagement in reform-oriented politics. The state's history of ethno-religious tensions, periodic electoral violence, and political exclusion has created an environment where participation is often perceived as risky or sectarian rather than as a platform for inclusive governance. Many Christian youths are influenced by narratives of distrust toward political structures, fear of victimization, and disillusionment with leaders who fail to deliver on promises. These factors can produce either defensive political involvement focused narrowly on protecting communal interests or outright withdrawal from formal political engagement, both of which undermine transformative change. Furthermore, socio-economic vulnerabilities, gender disparities, and the complex influence of digital media contribute to shaping Christian youths' political attitudes in Kaduna State. High unemployment and poverty may lead to transactional forms of political participation, such as vote-buying, while digital platforms—though offering opportunities for mobilization can also amplify misinformation and deepen polarization. Female Christian youths, in particular, face cultural and structural barriers that further limit their active involvement in transformative politics.

Objective of the study

The objective of this study is to assess the transformative political participation and attitudinal perspectives among Christian Youths in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Research Question

What is the transformative political participation and attitudinal perspectives among Christian Youths in Kaduna State, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between the transformative political participation and attitudinal perspectives among Christian Youths in Kaduna State, Nigeria

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, targeting Christian youths living in Kaduna State, Nigeria. From a total population of 2,762,278, a simple random sampling technique was applied to select 960 participants. Data were gathered through a carefully designed questionnaire, of which 931 were properly completed and returned, yielding an impressive 96.9% response rate. The instrument, developed by the researcher, underwent expert validation and a pilot reliability test, producing a reliability coefficient of 0.69, which confirmed its validity and dependability for data collection. Participants were drawn from eight local government areas in the state using a simple random selection process. The

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administration and retrieval of the questionnaires were managed by the researcher with assistance from five trained research aides. Data were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20, and responses were rated on a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). A benchmark mean score of 2.50 served as the decision rule, with scores equal to or above this value indicating agreement, while scores below reflected disagreement. The study's hypothesis was examined using a t-test at a 0.05 significance level.

Research Question 1

What is the transformative political participation and attitudinal perspectives among Christian Youths in Kaduna State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Opinions of the Respondents on transformative political participation and attitudinal perspectives among Christian Youths in Kaduna State, Nigeria

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	Christian youths participate transformatively in politics by demonstrating through march protest	346	365	107	113	3.01
2	Christian youths are involved in transformative politics participation by demonstrating through boycotts protest.	366	364	114	87	3.08
3	Christian youths are taking part in transformative political participation by demonstrating through sit ins protest	386	368	103	74	3.15
4	Writing about issues and leaders is a transformative participation by Christian youths	438	346	90	57	3.25
5	Christian youths are participating in transformative politics by lobbying for the laws that are of special interest	461	343	83	44	3.31
6	Christian youths are participating in transformative politics by engaging in to actualizes their interest.	484	346	67	34	3.37
7	Christian youths are participating in transformative politics by debating on political issues or bills	502	348	63	18	3.43
8	Christian youths participate in transformative politics by signing electoral petitions	530	338	57	6	3.50
Cumulative						3.26

Decision mean = 2.50

Table 1 shows that the mean scores for all items surpassed the benchmark value of 2.5. The means for individual items ranged from 3.01 to 3.50, indicating that respondents largely agreed with the statements provided. The overall mean score of 3.26, which is well above the set threshold, reflects respondents' strong acknowledgment of Christian Youths and Transformative Political Participation: Attitudinal Perspectives from Kaduna State, Nigeria. Consequently, the mean scores for all items were considered satisfactory and retained for subsequent analysis.

Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the transformative political participation and attitudinal perspectives among Christian Youths in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Table 2: Summary of One Sample T-Test on transformative political participation and attitudinal perspectives among Christian Youths in Kaduna State, Nigeria

Variable	N	Mean	Std.	Mean diff	Decision
Hypo ¹	931	3.1547	0.88702	3.0976	0.00

Table 2 displays the findings of the One-Sample T-Test carried out to assess transformative political participation and attitudinal perspectives among Christian Youths in Kaduna State, Nigeria, based on data from 931 respondents. The analysis yielded a mean score of 3.1547 with a standard deviation of 0.88702, reflecting a moderate variability in the responses. The calculated mean difference of 3.0976 from the test value indicates a statistically significant outcome, confirming that Christian youths engage in transformative politics through protests, political writing, lobbying, advocacy,



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debates, and signing electoral petitions. Consequently, the null hypothesis, which proposed that there is no significant participation of Christian youths in transformative politics through these activities, is rejected.

Finding of The Study

The study found that Christian youths participate in transformative politics through protests, political writing, lobbying, advocacy, debates, and signing electoral petitions.

Discussion of Finding on Assessment of transformative political participation and attitudinal perspectives among Christian Youths in Kaduna State, Nigeria

The primary objective of this study was to examine the transformative political participation and attitudinal perspectives among Christian Youths in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Transformative political participation, in this context, refers to deliberate and strategic engagement in political processes aimed at influencing governance, policy-making, and societal change. By focusing on the attitudes of Christian youths, the study sought to uncover the extent, forms, and motivations behind their political involvement, particularly in a socio-political environment often characterized by ethnic, religious, and ideological divisions. Understanding such perspectives is essential for appreciating the role of young Christians as agents of democratic transformation within their communities. The analysis of the data collected from respondents revealed that Christian youths actively engage in a variety of transformative political actions. These include organized protests such as marches, boycotts, and sit-ins; political writing aimed at shaping public discourse; lobbying for legislation aligned with their values; advocacy initiatives for social and political reforms; participation in debates on policy and governance issues; and signing electoral petitions to influence electoral integrity and governmental accountability. These diverse forms of engagement reflect not only political awareness but also a readiness to challenge the status quo and demand better governance. Such activities demonstrate a shift from passive political observation to active, issue-driven participation among Christian youths in Kaduna State. This finding corroborates the assertion of Eze (2018), who emphasized that politically conscious youths, particularly within faith-based communities, are increasingly adopting multifaceted strategies to bring about societal change. According to Eze, such engagement is often motivated by a combination of moral conviction, civic responsibility, and a desire to address systemic injustices. The alignment between the present study's findings and Eze's observations underscores the growing significance of youth-led political activism in shaping democratic processes in Nigeria. It also highlights the potential of Christian youths to serve as catalysts for political transformation when provided with the necessary platforms, civic education, and institutional support to sustain their advocacy efforts.

The findings of this study affirm that Christian youths in Kaduna State actively engage in transformative political participation, a result that aligns with Adebayo's (2019) assertion regarding the increasing influence of digital platforms in shaping religious and socio-political discourse. The One-Sample T-Test, conducted with responses from 931 participants, produced a mean score of 3.1547 and a standard deviation of 0.88702, indicating moderate variability in perspectives. The mean difference of 3.0976 from the test value revealed a statistically significant effect, thereby validating that Christian youths participate meaningfully in political activities such as protests, political writing, lobbying, advocacy, debates, and signing electoral petitions. The rejection of the null hypothesis underscores that such participation is not incidental but a deliberate and organized effort. This outcome reinforces Adebayo's (2019) argument that modern communication tools, particularly digital platforms, have amplified the capacity of faith-based youth groups to mobilize, advocate, and influence governance through coordinated, value-driven political engagement.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the finding of this study establishes that Christian youths in Kaduna State are active agents of transformative political participation, engaging through various strategic channels such as protests, political writing, lobbying, advocacy, debates, and signing electoral petitions. These activities demonstrate a conscious effort by young Christians to influence governance and policy outcomes, reflecting both civic responsibility and moral conviction. Their actions signify a departure from political apathy, showing a growing recognition of their role in shaping the socio-political landscape. Furthermore, the diverse forms of engagement identified in this study reveal that Christian youths do not limit themselves to conventional electoral participation but embrace a broad spectrum of political activism. By employing peaceful, issue-driven strategies, they seek to challenge systemic inefficiencies, promote social justice, and hold leaders accountable. This multidimensional approach reflects a level of political maturity and adaptability that positions them as vital stakeholders in democratic

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governance. The active involvement of Christian youths in transformative politics suggests a promising avenue for strengthening democracy in Nigeria. Their participation, rooted in both faith-based values and civic ideals, has the potential to foster inclusive governance, transparency, and sustainable political reforms. However, to maximize their impact, there is a need for continuous civic education, institutional support, and platforms that amplify their voices, ensuring that their efforts contribute meaningfully to the nation's democratic development.

Recommendations

- i. The Kaduna State Government is encouraged to develop well-structured Youth Political Engagement and Civic Education initiatives in collaboration with civil society organizations, designed to equip Christian youths with the necessary knowledge, skills, and legal understanding for meaningful political participation.
- ii. Church denominations across Kaduna State should embed civic responsibility and governance awareness programs within their youth fellowships, seminars, and leadership development activities.

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