YOUTHS, NEW MEDIA AND THE RISE OF PARTICIPATORY POLITICS IN NIGERIA

[1]Desmond Onyemechi Okocha
[2]Miracle Ademu-Eteh

[1.2,] Department of Mass Communication,
Faculty of Social Sciences,
Bingham University, Karu, Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

Abstract
The new media provides a platform and mechanisms for the masses to express their opinions whilst exerting influence with respect to political, economic, or other social decisions. Since the return to democratic rule in 1999, political participation has increased tremendously in Nigeria. This study examines youth, new media, and participatory politics in Nigeria. The study is hinged on Procedural Democratic Theory while the survey research design was utilized with questionnaire as instrument for data collection. The data collected is analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found that there is a significant relationship between the new media and rise of participatory politics amongst the youths in Nigeria. Based on the findings, the study recommends that Nigerians youths should use new media positively to enhance participatory politics in Nigeria, creation of digital spaces where political studies and in-depth arguments can take place with aim to increasing the awareness of the average youth in democracy and politics and this will also influence the general public and development of internship placements in political parties and legislature, this would also lead to a smooth transitioning of leadership from the old to the youths because they would have groomed them in the ways of the Nigerian political system. The study thus concludes that the Nigerian youth are willing and desirous of playing active roles in political engagement and democracy in Nigeria
Keywords: Democracy, Digital Communications, New Media, Participatory Politics, Youth

Introduction

The internet has changed the world in many ways, and one major change is the revolutionized process of political communication through a system which has come to be regarded to as "New Media". The evolution of new media has improved the process of political communication and expanded the boundaries of political participation in Nigeria. According to McQuail (2005) "the new media has been widely hailed as a potential way of escape from the top-down politics of mass democracies in which tightly organized political parties make policies unilaterally and mobilize support behind them with minimal negotiation and grassroots input" In principle, new media provides a mechanism for people to receive differentiated political ideas and information with practically unrestricted access, allowing for greater negotiation between leaders and followers. According to Suntai and Targema, (2015), the process of governance in democracy entails public participation and it therefore benefits greatly from new media. With the differing ways of sharing information in today's world, one key potential of new media is that it has raised the magnitude of information available to the people, with freedom to create and share information to others with just a touch of a button.

According to (Okoro and Nwafor, 2013), participatory politics can be referred to, as the platform and/or mechanisms for the masses to express their opinions whilst exerting influence with respect to political, economic, or other social decisions. Since the return to democratic rule in 1999, political participation has increased tremendously in Nigeria. Political participation builds public support for governmental activities and enables individuals and groups to influence governmental decisions. Political participation may also lead to an evolutionary change in government as witnessed in the 2015 general elections when an incumbent president from the biggest political party in Africa was beaten at the polls. Another significant event was the wave of the #EndSARS protests in 2020 that erupted in most parts of the country which started due to agitations on social media. In all of the occasions mentioned, the youths took the center stage in bringing the change. In a 2018 demographic statistics report by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the Nigerian population was projected as "a youthful population". It can therefore be deduced that a large proportion of the Nigerian population is made up of youths. In Nigeria, youths can participate in politics at the minimum age of 18 years. Research has shown that the emergence of new media has increased the participation of youths in Nigerian politics. This is because the new media is a veritable platform of political socialization that attracts young citizens to the processes of politics. In the words of Yamamoto (2015) "the new media has become an important source of political participation for youths who are normally not

attracted to politics as these platforms have become the best tools to assess the popularity of a political candidate among youths"

Statement of the Problem

In recent times, there have been concerns about the low participatory tendencies amongst the youths in politics, both in Europe and beyond (Theocharis & Quintelier, 2014). Current concerns indicate that youths are becoming more disappointed with the conventional ways of representative government, (Milner, 2011) which have been generated by several trends such as youth denial to participate in the electoral processes, low rates of electoral turnout and even hatred of politics (Wattenberg, 2012). This trend suggests that the youth are not well represented or considered as influential in national and international level of democratic system thus, they become victims instead of becoming stakeholders in political affairs because their priorities are often under-addressed (Diemer & Li, 2011). Consequently, this paper seeks to interrogate the following issues;

1. Is there a problem of inactive youth participation in Nigerian politics?
2. Has the new media encouraged Nigerian youths to become active in politics?

Objectives of the Study

Broadly speaking, this paper aims to examine the relationship between new media and the rise of participatory politics amongst the youths in Nigeria. More specifically, the paper seeks to find if there is a significant relationship between social media and rise of participatory politics amongst youths in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarifications

Youth

The concept of youth is the period of life coming between childhood and maturity; adolescence. Youth also refers to the state or quality of being young, especially of being vigorous and lively, or immature, impetuous, etc. Youth is the time of life when one is young, and often means the time between childhood and adulthood. It is also defined as "the appearance, freshness, vigor, spirit, etc., characteristic of one who is young" The concept of youth is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence. That is the reason, as a category, youth is more fluid than other fixed age-groups. Yet, age is the easiest way to define this group, particularly in relation to education and employment, because 'youth' is often referred to a person between the ages of leaving compulsory education, and finding their first job. The United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines 'youth', as those

persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States. The Secretary-General first referred to the current definition of youth in 1981 in his report to the General Assembly on International Youth Year (A/36/215, para. 8 of the annex) and endorsed it in ensuing reports (A/40/256, para. 19 of the annex). However, in both the reports, the Secretary-General also recognized that, apart from that statistical definition, the meaning of the term 'youth' varies in different societies around the world. When the General Assembly, by its resolution 50/81 in 1995, adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and beyond, it reiterated that the United Nations defined youth as the age cohort of 15-24.

The Concept of New Media

New media can be described as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of the World Wide Web (WWW) that allows the creation and exchange of user-generated contents (Auwal, 2015). According to Asemah (2011), new media are a disparate set of communication technologies that share certain features apart from being new, made possible by digitalization and being widely available for personal use as a communication device. The new media are not only or even mainly concerned with the production and distribution of messages, but at least, mainly concerned with processing, exchange and storage. Amobi (2011) defines new media as an interactive digital media, computerized or networked information and communication technologies such as the internet, as opposed to traditional media such as print and television. Lister et al (2009) describes new media technologies as all environments that let users search, research, share and configure their media experience will become valuable mediums. Crosbie (2006) posited that new media are uniquely industrialized and information can simultaneously be delivered or displayed to a potentially infinite number of people. Each of the people involved – whether publisher, broadcast or consumer shares equal and reciprocal control over the content. Any media a content that is digital can be stored as the 1s and 0s of computer, code, including text, audio, pictures and video. This digital content can be delivered via different media, such as a compact disk (CD), digital video disk (DVD) or digital radio or television broadcast signal.

New media refers to digital media platforms that are interactive, incorporate two-way communication and involve some form of computing. According to Manovich (2001), these elements may be present in older media forms as well. The new element that points to a significant change in the media is that they are the result of a convergence between the computational logic characteristic of the computers and the communicative logic characteristic of

the media. Manovich (2003) defines the new media as interactive forms of communication that uses the internet including podcasts, social network, text messages, blogs, wikis, virtual words or more.

The implication is that new media tools can help one connect people with information and services, collaborate with people including those within ones organization or community and create new content, services, communities and channels of communication that help one deliver information and services. New media is a term meant to encompass the emergence of digital, computerized, or networked information and communication technologies in the later part of the 20th century. New Media refers to a wide range of changes in media production, distribution and use. Examples of new media include: Websites, virtual worlds and virtual reality, multimedia and computer games etc.

Review of Related Literature

The rapid increase of new media platforms in Nigeria has attracted the attention of scholars, and these scholars have been involved in investigating the ripple effects of this new media platforms on different disciplines. Research has demonstrated that new media has proved highly significant in increasing access to key information that assist the masses to make better decisions (Alexander, Ifeanyi and Martin, 2016). The scope of new media in this study encapsulates platforms such as websites, online streams, emailing, social media platforms, online forums and communities, blogs and vlogs, internet telephony, online ads, and so on. In all of these cases, social media platforms play a key role in closing the information gap because they house the other new media platforms through their various routes. Social media are web-based communication platforms that allow users to download, post, connect, and cooperate with one another regardless of geography or time. "Social media as a concept is the use of technology combined with social interaction to create and co-create value" (Olise 2014). It is thus a shift from how people discover, read and share news, information and content which may be text, audio, video or graphics. Media scholars argue that social media involves a fusion of sociology and technology to transform the process of communication from monologue to dialogue or better still, to an interactive process. Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Tik-Tok, YouTube, Instagram, and Google+ are just a few of the popular social media services. Despite Nigeria's technological inadequacies, these relatively new mediums are gaining appeal in the country and assisting in the completion of complex political duties.

According to Nwabueze (2014), "Nigeria has registered some level of presence on the internet-based community". There are various Nigerian-run weblogs, many of which provide a platform for young people to express

themselves and contribute meaningfully to themes being debated by a group of people. Some of the most popular blogs in Nigeria include Klinreports.com, Chidiopara reports, Nairaland, Naijapost, Naija.com, Pulse Nigeria, Topic.net, and Amana online, among many others. In fact, as of July 2009, there were about 475 Nigerian blogs, with Nigeria having an online population of 42 million people (Nwabueze 2014). This tendency must have greatly improved over time. As one would rightly expect, the heavy online presence has widened the scope of citizen journalism practice in the country, a form of journalism where members of the public play an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing, and disseminating news and information. "With citizens becoming reporters of issues and events happening around them, freedom of information is enhanced, empowering them to be actively involved in the democratic process" (Suntai and Targema 2015).

Democracy puts accent on people's participation. Everyone involved should be carried along, and this is where the role of the new media becomes necessary. Thus, an environment of dialogue is sine qua non for the sustenance of democracy, Social media and citizen journalism, which, among other things, allow for involvement and open access to all, are thus critical to the survival of modern democracies. Nonetheless, the amount of information available to youngsters to make informed judgments during the voting process is critical to their civic obligation, and that is why Gambo (2013) stresses that "liberal democracies rests purely on the capacity of the mass media to gather and disseminate information that can guide citizens in making better informed choices". While democracy needs adequate information to filter through its various levels, social media provides the best platform for the circulation of such information. Through its various platforms, the youths get exposed to information about the activities of the principal actors in the process of governance. Thus, social media has become a formidable force that drives today's contemporary Nigerian democracy.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on The Procedural Democratic Theory (PDT) of governance. The position that citizenship engagement with political issues ought to be limited to voting participation or representation of the electorate" (McCaffrie & Akram, 2014). After choosing their delegates, citizens should refrain from meddling with their duties as policymakers. "Traditionally, elections are seen as a means of control for corrupt and greedy political representatives" (Thiery, 2011). However, from the 1980s, there were calls for a more dynamic and active citizenship participation in democratic governance (Ebeling, 2015). The procedural perspective of the democratic system

implicitly acknowledged that normal citizens are unable to engage properly with political issues, while 'supporters of participatory democracy promote more active engagement and democratic responsibility or accountability" (Ebeling, 2015). Honneth (1998) argued that "dynamic or active citizenship engagement can be a very useful guarantee against poor democratic systems" as advocated by McCaffrie and Akram (2014).

The procedural view, on the other hand, is not intended to prohibit genuine democracy, and neither is participatory democracy without flaws. There are genuine democratic reasons in favor of procedural governance whereby "resolutions or decisions reached and made because of political discussions and thought may support the relations between citizenship and elected delegates, and thus contribute to civil awareness" (Doldor, 2014). While democratic participatory theories suggest that "citizens inherently yearn to engage" (Jackson, 2015), Vite (2018) claimed that "some citizens might decline to engage effectively in political issues and would rather actualize a "furtive" democratic system in which they attempt to avoid the procedural view". On the other hand, it is not meant to preclude actual democracy, and participatory democracy is not without defects. Procedures-based governance has genuine democratic justifications. While elected delegates set policy on their behalf, they are free to follow their own interests.

In an era where formal political engagement in acceptable democratic government is low, the idea appears to be more accurate than participatory democratic governance (De Minico, 2013). Furthermore, earlier theories of procedural and furtive democracy neglect to address the question of how to ensure that elected delegates will not mishandle whatever authority is granted to them, therefore this study is reinforced by evidence that people are uninterested and uncaring about political matters. "If citizenship is only engaged in elections, there may be long time periods before the activities of elected delegates will be checked" (Dzur, 2016). Conversely, McCaffrie and Akram (2014) made a compelling case for the fragile need for a participatory society, since it does not convincingly question the supporting rationale for enabling active or dynamic political activity (Froissart, 2014).

The deliberative democratic government (which improves collective decision-making) is a metamorphosis of the ideas presented by proponents of participatory democratic government in the 1970s (Vite, 2019a). It is a conceptual paradigm that has been molded for years, especially in response to what appears to be flaws in modern liberal democratic governance (Vite, 2018). The political elite's remoteness from ordinary citizens, as well as the participation of celebrities in party political problems, might discourage voters from participating in political debate (Kosterina, 2016). The need for a new sort of political participation to deal with these issues is critical to the

democratic system's deliberative (improved collective decision-making) nature. These rely on citizens being encouraged to have informal discussions and debates about political issues (Emery, 2016).

This structure's importance is in improving the quality of interaction rather than the quantity, which is a substantial change from previous experiences with participatory democracy systems (Kosterina, 2016). However, proponents of the deliberative democratic system hold wildly divergent views on how to carry out, implement, and evaluate the outcomes of debates (Theis, 2016). Furthermore, these problems back up the widespread criticism of democratic deliberation. According to Hauptmann (2004), the demands for equality and logical agreement are unrealistic (Crick, 2014). For example, according to Crick (2014), discussion within citizenship can be beneficial for improving the quality of democratic administration and policymaking because it emphasizes formal processes, which can exclude many potential members. As a result, rather than increasing access to engagement, it may promote systemic inequality. The procedural democratic theory is relevant to the study because it aids in conceptualizing new media as a platform for informal democratic participation, allowing ordinary people who are excluded from the bureaucracy-infested traditional media to contribute to governance.

Methodology

The survey research method is used in this study. The survey design deals with the examination of a sample's characteristics through inquiry that allows a researcher to generalize about his population of interest. The type of data used in this study is primary data, which was collected through questionnaires sent to the study's target audience.

Sample Size and Technique

The purposive sample technique was utilized to pick 400 respondents in the New Karu LGA of Nasarawa State. The researcher's accessibility, as well as the research's time constraints, played a role in selecting the sample. Because it provides a simplified formula for calculating sample sizes and assumes a normal distribution among the selected population, the actual sample size is obtained using Taro Yamane's (1967) approach.
The formular is stated as [**$n= N/1+N (e^2)$];**

Where: N= Total population = 400; e = Level of error = 5%; 1 = Constant.

Therefore, n = 400/1+400 (0.05^2) = 400/1+400(0.0025) = 400/1+1 = 400/2 = 200

A well-structured questionnaire was given to these selected few to be returned after completion.

Method of Data Analysis

The descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyze the data collected. Utilizing the SPSS statistical program, descriptive statistics was calculated using tables, frequencies, and percentages of the various responses from the administered surveys. For the in-depth interview data, the analysis will be descriptive. The interviews were transcribed and summary statements that captured the main ideas of the research questions were used to draw conclusions, while the inferential statistics employed the use of Chi-square (x2) to test for goodness of fit.

The goodness of fit formula is given as follows.

$$\mathbf{X^2 = E\ (O\text{-}E^2) / E}$$

Where: E = Summation of total values; O= Observed Frequency; E=Expected Frequency

Rule of Thumb: The null hypothesis will be rejected if the calculated Chi-square value (Chi-square calculated) is greater than the crucial value (Chi-square tabulated) from the table, and the alternative hypothesis will be the resolving outcome. On the other hand, if the calculated chi-square value (Chi-square calculated) is less than the critical value (Chi-square tabulated) read from the table (i.e., Chi-square calculated < Chi-square tabulated) then we fail to reject null hypothesis.

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

The Chi-square method was adopted for the analysis. Due to the volume and complexity of the data in this study, the researcher adopted the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 to carry out the chi-square analysis in the research study. The level of significance for conducting the test is 0.05(5%).

Analysis of Response Rate

A total of 200 questionnaires were administered to the study sample. Out of this figure, 150 questionnaires were retrieved in total from the respondents. A presentation of this analysis is shown in the table 1 below.

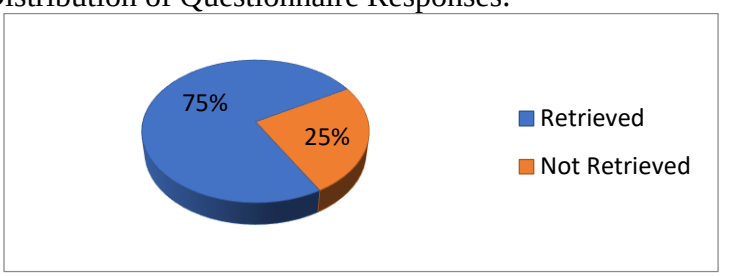
Table 1: Analysis of Response Rate

Source: Field Survey, 2021

S/N	Area Captured	Distributed		Retrieved		Not retrieved	
1	New Karu, LGA	200	100%	150	75%	50	25%
	TOTAL	200		150		50	

Data in table 1 shows the analysis of response rate. Out of the total 200 questionnaires distributed, which represents a 100% response rate, only 150 questionnaires representing 75% of the response rate, were retrieved. Only 25% of the total distributed questionnaires were not returned. It can therefore be inferred that the questionnaire has covered to a large extent the scope that can give the researcher the required data needed to arrive at a logical conclusion.

Figure 1: Distribution of Questionnaire Responses.



Source: Field Survey, 2021

Analysis of Questionnaire Responses

Table 2: Sex of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	72	46.8	48.0	48.0
	Female	78	50.6	52.0	100.0
	Total	150	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	4	2.6		
Total		154	100.0		

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2021

Data in table 2 shows the gender distribution of respondents that took part in this research survey. The table indicates that 72 (46.8%) of the respondents were males, while 78 (50.6%) were females. This implies that majority of the respondents in this research study were females. This survey reveals that the number of females outnumbered that of the males; hence the researcher did not have an equally distributed representation of both sexes required to give answers to the questions.

Table 3: Age of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	24-26	30	19.5	20.0	20.0
	27-33	62	40.3	41.3	61.3
	34-37	58	37.7	38.7	100.0
	Total	150	97.4	100.0	

Missing	System	4	2.6		
Total		154	100.0		

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2021

Data in table 3 shows the age distribution of respondents that took part in this research survey. The table indicates that 30 (19.5%) of the respondents were 24-26 years, 62(40.3%) were in the age category 27-33 years, 58 (37.7%) were in the age category 34-37 years, while 0(0%) were in the age category 40 and above. This implies that majority of the respondents that participated in this research survey were in the age category 27-33 years which constituted the highest percentage (37.7)

Table 4: Educational Qualification of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Postgraduate	18	11.7	12.0	12.0
	HND/BSC	67	43.5	44.7	56.7
	OND	40	26.0	26.7	83.3
	Professional Certificate	20	13.0	13.3	96.7
	Others	5	3.2	3.3	100.0
	Total	150	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	4	2.6		
Total		154	100.0		

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 4 shows the educational background distribution of respondents that participated in the research survey. The table indicates that none of the respondents were holders of primary school certificate, 18 (11.7%) were Postgraduates, 67(43.5%) were HND/BSc holders, 40(26.0%) were OND holders, 20 (13.0%) have professional Certificates, while 5 (3.2%) had other formal qualifications. This implies that majority of the respondents that participated in the research survey were holders of HND/BSc degree holders.

Table **5: Occupation of Respondents**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Civil Servant	41	26.6	27.3	27.3
	Student	47	30.5	31.3	58.7
	Entrepreneur	62	40.3	41.3	100.0
	Total	150	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	4	2.6		

Total	154	100.0		

Source: ***Field Survey, 2021***

Table 5 shows the occupational distribution of respondents that participated in the research survey. The Table indicates that 41(26.6%) of the respondents were Civil Servant, 47(30.5%) were Students, while 62(40.3%) were Entrepreneurs. This implies that majority of the respondents were Entrepreneurs, followed by Civil Servants who had jobs at few ministries in the Kaduna metropolis.

Table 6: **Respondents Activeness on social media**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-2	39	25.3	26.0	26.0
	3-5	84	54.5	56.0	82.0
	6-10	27	17.5	18.0	100.0
	Total	150	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	4	2.6		
Total		154	100.0		

Table 6 shows the activeness of the respondents on social media that took part in this research survey on a scale of 0-10. The table indicates that, 39 (25.3%) of the respondents ticked 0-2, which indicates how seldom they were on social media, 84(54.5%) ticked 3-5, which indicates how fairly frequent they are on social media, while 27 (17.5%) ticked 6-10, which clearly stated how very frequent they are on social media This implies that majority of the respondents in this research study were on the 3-5 scale which indicated fairly frequent.

Table 7: **Respondents Social Media Account**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Twitter	16	10.4	10.7	10.7
	WhatsApp	3	1.9	2.0	12.7
	Facebook	10	6.5	6.7	19.3
	Instagram	-	-	-	-
	1 & 4	28	18.2	18.7	38.0
	2 & 3	93	60.4	62.0	100.0
	Total	150	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	4	2.6		
Total		154	100.0		

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 7 shows the distribution of responses on the type of social media account respondents use. This table shows that majority of the respondents 93 (60.4%) are very active on WhatsApp and Facebook only.

Table 8: Frequency which Respondent Share Political Views on Your Social Media Page

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Frequent	65	42.2	43.3	43.3
	Very Frequent	60	39.0	40.0	83.3
	Not Frequent	25	16.2	16.7	100.0
	Total	150	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	4	2.6		
Total		154	100.0		

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 8 shows the distribution of responses from respondents on how often they shared their political views on social media websites. This table shows that 65(42.2%) responded frequently, while 60 (39.0%) responded very frequent, while 25(16.2%) responded not frequently. This implies that majority of respondents share their political views via social media outlets on a frequent basis.

Table 9: **Ownership of Permanent Voters Card**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	121	78.6	80.7	80.7
	No	29	18.8	19.3	100.0
	Total	150	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	4	2.6		
Total		154	100.0		

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2021

Table 9 shows the distribution of responses from respondents on whether they have their Permanent Voters Card or Not. This table shows that a larger chunk of respondents 121 (78.6%) responded 'Yes' while 29(18.8%) responded 'No'. This implies that most of the respondents have their Permanent Voters Card at their disposal.

Table 10: **Believe in the slogan "Not Too Young to Run"**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	Yes	86	55.8	57.3	57.3
	No	46	29.9	30.7	88.0
	Sometimes	18	11.7	12.0	100.0
	Total	150	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	4	2.6		
Total		154	100.0		

Table 10 shows the distribution of responses from respondents on whether they believe in the "Not too young to run" slogan. This table clearly shows that 86 (55.8%) of respondents responded 'Yes' while 49(29.9%) responded 'No' and 18 (11.7%) sometimes believe in the slogan. This implies that most of the respondents strongly believe that "Not too young to run" is not even a myth at all and therefore believe that it should be given a chance in the Nigerian system

Table 11: **Effectiveness of youths when voted for in power**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Effective	67	43.5	44.7	44.7
	Fairly Effective	57	37.0	38.0	82.7
	Not Effective	14	9.1	9.3	92.0
	No Comment	12	7.8	8.0	100.0
	Total	150	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	4	2.6		
Total		154	100.0		

Table 11 shows the distribution of responses from respondents on the effectiveness of youths in power. The table shows that 67(43.5%) responded 'Very effective', 57(37.0%) responded 'Fairly Effective', and 14(9.1%) responded Not Effective and 12 (7.8%) responded with 'No comment'. This implies that most of the respondents feel the youths will have a greater effect when voted for in power.

Table 12: Whether Respondent Would Vote for Youth

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	115	74.7	76.7	76.7
	No	2	1.3	1.3	78.0
	Maybe	33	21.4	22.0	100.0
	Total	150	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	4	2.6		

Total	154	100.0		

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2021

Table 12 shows the distribution of responses from respondents on whether they will. This table shows that 115 (74.7%) of respondents responded, 'Yes' while 2(1.3%) responded 'No' and 33 (21.4%) responded 'Maybe'. This implies that most of the respondents are willing to give the youths who are credible a chance on Election Day by exercising their franchise.

Hypothesis Testing: *Chi-square CROSS TABULATION*

The necessary steps listed above are used in calculating X2 for testing hypothesis. Chi-square can be applied in testing the relationship between two variables. The hypothesis of this paper is stated in the null form below

$H_{0:1}$ - There is no significant relationship between social media and rise of participatory politics amongst youths in Nigeria.

The hypothesis of the research would be tested through the cross tabulation of Table 5 and Table 7 of the questionnaire. The questions are:
Question 5: On a scale of 0-10, how active are you on social media?

Question 7: How frequent do you share your political views on your social media page?

The questionnaire variables on table 5(activeness on social media) and table 7(sharing of political views on media) in a cross-tabulated format. Sharing of political views on social media is presented vertically on the contingency while the dependent variable activeness on social media is presented horizontally. That is the independent on the columns and dependent on the rows.

How engaged are you on social media? How frequently do you discuss your political views? Crosstabulation

		How often do you share your political views on social media			Total
		Frequent	Very Frequent	Not Frequent	
How active are you on social media	0-2	8	24	7	39
	3-5	47	26	11	84
	6-10	10	10	7	27
Total		65	60	25	150

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.392[a]	4	.003
Likelihood Ratio	16.640	4	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	.781	1	.377
N of Valid Cases	150		
A.1 cells (11.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.50.			

Rule of Thumb: Where X2 cal is Chi-square calculated and p-value is represented. Chi-square critical
X2 CAL = 16.392 at 1 Degree of freedom and 5% level of significance
P value = 0.05
X2 tabulated =3.84
X2 CAL > X2 TAB (i.e 16.392 > 3.84) thus we reject the null hypothesis and fail to reject the alternative hypothesis. Thus, there is a significant relationship between social media and rise of participatory politics in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

1. Nigerians youths should use new media positively to enhance participatory politics in Nigeria.
2. Creation of digital spaces where political studies and in-depth arguments can take place with aim to increasing the awareness of the average youth in democracy and politics and this will also influence the general public.
3. Development of internship placements in political parties and legislature, this would also lead to a smooth transitioning of leadership from the old to the youths because they would have groomed them in the ways of the Nigerian political system

Conclusion

Going by the wanton display of commitment and passion for human rights development demonstrated by the youth during the #EndSARS protest, it is safe to conclude that the Nigerian youth are willing and desirous of playing active roles in political engagement and democracy in Nigeria. The popularity and deep penetration of the new media and the way it influences peoples' lives cannot be overemphasized in today's world. New media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp are formidable forces in the consolidation of democracy. The information gap they help bridge, highly benefits democracy and reinforces the principles of transparency and

accountability in the process of governance. Nigerian democracy is gradually moving towards an enviable destination courtesy of the new media. In the same light, the new media platforms have expanded the boundaries of political participation and interaction between the ruled and the rulers.

References

Adler, S. and Clark, R. (2011). An Invitation to Social Research: How It's Done. Belmont: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Amobi, T. I. (2011). Assessing global Digital Divide through Computer Ownership, Literacy, Access and Usage of New Media by Nigeria youths,

*Ademiluyi, **T.** (2019), Government should not use regulation as pretext to muzzle the opposition/*

Alexander, O., Ifeanyi, A. L. and Martin, O. P. (2016). "Preying on platforms: a comparative analysis of social media and traditional mass media advertisements in the 2015 presidential election campaigns in Nigeria". *The Nigerian Journal of Communication: the Journal of the African Council for Communication Education* (ACCE), Nigerian Chapter, 13(1),1- 22.

Crick, N. (2014). The rhetorical surface of democracy*: How deliberative ideals undermine democratic politics by Scott Welsh*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

De Minico, G. (2013). New social rights and Internet: Which policies combine them? *International Community Law Review, 15*(3), 261-286.

Diemer, M. a., & Li, C.-H. (2011). Critical consciousness development and political participation among marginalized youth. Child Development, 82 (6), 1815–1833.

Doldor, E. (2014). From politically naive to politically mature: Examining leaders' political maturation journey. *Academy of Management Proceedings*, 1, 15031-15031.

Dzur, A. (2016). Participatory democracy in unlikely places: What democratic theorists can learn from democratic professionals. *Democratic Theory, 3*(2).

Froissart, C. (2014). The ambiguities between contention and political participation: A study of civil society development in authoritarian regimes. *Journal of Civil Society, 10*(3), 219- 222.

Gambo, D. (2013). "Media ethics, professionalism and the reportage of the electoral reform processin Nigeria". In Pate U. Nwabueze C. and

Idiong, I. *Politic, culture and the Media in Nigeria,* pp.101-122. Ibadan: Stirling Horden publishers.

Hauptmann, E. (2004). Deliberation day—Deliberative democracy in America: A proposal for a popular branch of government and democratic autonomy: Public reasoning about the ends of policy. *Perspectives on Politics, 2*(4), 821-823.

Havard Univeristy Blog (2021). What is Participatory Politics. Retrieved, August 13, 2021. https://yppactionframe.fas.harvard.edu/blog/what-participatory-politics-0

Honneth, A. (1998). Democracy as reflexive cooperation: John Dewey and the theory of democracy today. *Political Theory, 26*(6), 763-783.

Jaffe, L. (1995). "The New Media Era." Retrieved from http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/45998330/ns/technology_and_sciencetech_and_gadgets/t/socialmedia-widen-impact-nigeria-fuelprotests/

Kerlinger, F. N. (1973) *Foundations of behavioural research,* (2nd Ed). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

Kosterina, S. (2016). Why vote for a co-opted party? Endogenous government power increases and control of opposition politicians in authoritarian regimes. *Comparative PoliticalStudies, 50*(9).

McCaffrie, B., & Akram, S. (2014). Crisis of democracy? Recognizing the democratic potential of alternative forms of political participation. *Democratic Theory, 1*(2-30).

McQuail, D. (2005). Mass Communication Theory: An introduction. London: Sage Publications.

Milner, H. (2011). Political dropouts and the internet generation. In E. Dunkels, G.-M. Franberg, & C. Hallgren (Eds.), Interactive Media Use and Youth: Learning, Knowledge Exchange and Behavior (pp. 186–206).

Nwabueze, C. (2014). Introduction to mass communication*: media ecology in the global village.* Owerri: Top Shelve publishes.

National Bureau of Statistics (2018). The 2017 Demographic Statistics Bulletin.

Okoro, N., & Nwafor, K. A. (2013). Social media and political participation in Nigeria during the 2011 general elections: The lapses and the lessons. Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences, 1(3), 29-46.

Olise, F.P. (2014). "Social Media Emergence: Implications for Journalism Practice in Nigeria". *Mass Media Review: An international Journal of Mass Communication.* Vol.1 No 4

Suntai, D.I. and Targema, T.S. (2015). Social media and democracy in Africa: assessing the 2015 general election experience in Nigeria. Paper presented at the International Conference on Democracy, Dictatorship

and Development in Africa. Department of History and International Studies. Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lappi.2-5 August 2015.

Techopedia (2021), "New Media". https://www.techopedia.com/definition/416/new-media Retrieved August 13, 2021

Theocharis, Y., & Quintelier, E. (2014). Stimulating citizenship or expanding entertainment?The effect of Facebook on adolescent participation. New Media & Society. 1-20

Thiery, G. (2011). Partis politiques et élections de 2011 au Nigeria. *Afrique contemporaine, 239*(3), 89.

Theis, J. (2016). Political science, civic engagement, and the wicked problems of democracy. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 173, 41-49.

Wattenberg, M. P. (2012). Is voting for young people? Pearson

Wikipedia (2021). "Youth". Retrieved August 13, 2021. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youth#cite_note-Youth1-2

Vite, B. I. N. (2018a). Comprehending the study of youth political participation in Niger Delta, Nigeria. *US-China Education Review A, 8*(4), 171-179.

Vite, B. N., & Dibang-Achua, R. O. (2019a). Forming young people and citizenship. *Nessa Journal Social and Political Science, 1*(9).

Yamamoto, M., & Kushin, M. J. (2014). More harm than good? Online media use and political disaffection among college students in the 2008 election. Journal of Computer- Mediated Communication, 19 (3), 430–445.