

An Exposition of Youth and Political Participation in Katsina Local Government through the Lens of Civic Voluntarism Model

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to assess the reasons behind the low interest of youths in political activities in Katsina Local Government Area, Katsina state, Nigeria. The study used the Civic Voluntarism Model to assess what influence if any does resources, psychological engagement, and recruitment have on the political participation of youths in the study area. Using a survey method, a sample size of 388 was derived based on the projected population size of 108000. Multiple Regression analysis was employed to test the influence of CVM components on youth's political participation. Findings showed that recruitment and resources are both significant predictors of youth political participation with recruitment been the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.268$, $p < 0.001$). The findings further showed that psychological engagement does not significantly correlate with political participation. In conclusion the results of this study provide some fascinating insights by affirming that resources and recruitment are pivotal in fostering youth political participation. Therefore, government and stakeholders should adopt ways to strengthen grassroots mobilization for youths and also provide vocational training and microfinance programs in other to boost their financial capacity.

Keywords: Youths, Political Participation, Civic Voluntarism Model, Katsina, Nigeria.

Introduction

Youth constitute 16% of the world's population (UN, 2022) and form an integral part of any society. They typically represent about half of a nation's workforce and contribute significantly to economic and social dynamics. Despite their numerical strength and societal contributions, youths remain grossly marginalized in politics. In a report, the Inter-Parliamentary Union reports that only 2.8% of national parliament's members are youths (IPU, 2023). This attests to the gross under-representation of youth in politics.

Equal political participation of all peoples in a society remains one of the most vital elements of democracy. A political system becomes representative only when all parts of the society are represented in decision making processes (Verba et al., 1995). Therefore, the importance of youth participation in politics cannot be overemphasized. Research conducted in both developed and developing countries, including the United States, Nigeria and European nations have revealed that youths show little interest in formal and informal political activities (Jolaade, 2017; Limber & Kaufman, 2002; Weiss, 2020). In addition, youths show particular distrust in government institutions and politicians (Claassen & Magalhães, 2023; Shamsu, 2020).

The situation in Nigeria mirrors this global trend. A 2020 Youth Survey by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in 2020 estimated the total population of youth aged (15 - 35) years as 95,315,144 (NBS, 2020). Despite this demographic strength that could significantly influence electoral outcomes, Nigeria's political landscape since democratic transition in 1999 reveals a glaring absence of young people (Obani, 2023). Electoral records from 1999 onwards and subsequent elections in Nigeria shows minimal youth representation in Federal and state legislature, along with low youth voter turnout. The "Not Too Young to Run" bill introduced in 2014 to boost youth engagement has yielded no positive results (Obani, 2023).

This predicament is also evident in Katsina Local Government, where politics remains dominated by older generations, limiting youth involvement and contributing to their underrepresentation. Data from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for the 2019 and 2023 elections confirms the gross underrepresentation of youths in political activities in Katsina local government. Table 1 below shows the ages of candidates who won major elective offices in Katsina Local Government.

Table 1: Ages of candidates elected during the 2019 and 2023 election cycles in Katsina Local Government, Katsina State, Nigeria

Elective Position	Age in Election Year	
	2019	2023
Senator	59	58
House of Representative	42	42
House of Assembly	52	55
Chairman Local Government	57	36

From the foregoing we can deduce that youths in Katsina local government are not actively engaged in politics. Many studies have been conducted in Nigeria on youth political involvement using different models and methods (Afolayan, 2018; Iringe-koko & Adedunmola, 2024; Odum, 2022; Shamsu, 2020). However, most of the researchers have given far too little attention of applying theory of political participation to understand youth political participation. In addition, no research has been found in the study area that apply the CVM model to investigate the low presence of youth in political activities. Therefore, this study attempt to bridge this gap and applies the Civic Voluntarism Model, a robust political participation theory developed by Verba et al., to understand key determinants of political engagement. The CVM model's key variables (civic skills, psychological engagement, and recruitment) will help explain youth's conspicuously low engagement in political processes. In line with these issues, this study has the following objectives:

Research Objectives

1. To assess how resources (education, income, and time availability) influence youth political participation in Katsina Local Government.

2. To examine how psychological engagement (political interest, political efficacy, and partisanship) shapes youth political participation in Katsina Local Government.
3. To analyse how recruitment networks (peer influence, community involvement, and political mobilization) affect youth political participation in Katsina Local Government.
4. To identify the most significant predictors of youth political participation using the Civic Voluntarism Model components.

Youth and Political Participation in the Nigerian Context

Defining Youth and Political Participation

The stages of human life from childhood, adulthood, youth, and old age involves change. The transition from adulthood to adolescence continues to be one of the most important stages of human development because it gives people the ability to live independently and determine how they will contribute to society (Tekindal, 2017). The definition of who is a youth is not yet agreed upon. While the United Nations defines youth as those aged 15-24 (UN, 2022), Nigeria's National Youth Policy encompasses individuals aged 18-35. The term "political participation" refers to the voluntary acts that members of the public do to either directly or indirectly affect public policies through the selection of policymakers (Obani, 2023). It encompasses actions such as voting, campaigning, making donations, getting in touch with representatives, petitioning, demonstrating, and working with others on different political issues.

A Brief Historical Evolution of Youth Political Engagement

The evolvement of youth participation in politics in Nigeria traces back to the activities of the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM). The NYM is a political party established in the year 1934 by prominent figures such as Nnamdi Azikwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Samuel Akintola and a host of others whose efforts greatly contributed to Nigeria's attainment of independence as a nation. As pointed out by Arifalo (1986), the NYM fought and won elections for the Lagos Town Council in October 1938. This victory effectively ended the dominance of Herbert Macaulay and the National Democratic Party. These student union activists evolved into formidable leaders who challenged colonial rule and significantly increased youth participation in Nigeria's political, social, and economic development. However, the incursion of the military in the political landscape of Nigeria for over three decades serves as a major setback for youth engagement in politics. Military rule does not allow for the participatory democracy but a rule by decree (Muse, 2014).

Democratic Transition and Contemporary Challenges

In the year 1999, Nigeria transition back to democratic rule and has been able to consolidate it for over two decades thereby paving way for political engagements. Despite conducting seven election cycles from 1999 to 2015, youth participation remained limited due to constitutional age requirements (35-40 years) for elective offices, effectively excluding the

majority of young Nigerians. The 2018 "Not Too Young to Run" bill reduced these requirements to 25-30 years, promoting inclusivity and reducing representation gaps (Obani, 2023).

Current Research Findings

Research on Nigerian youth political participation reveals mixed patterns. In an attempt to understand the reasons why youth are absent in the political realm Akinteyum (2021) conducted an empirical study to investigate the relationship between youth political participation, good governance and social inclusion. A sample of 1208 respondents was drawn from an online discussion webpage and findings from the study reveals that good governance and social inclusion both significantly affect youth political participation. The author recommends that the government should establish a leadership institute that will train youth with the art of governance. Jolaade (2017) also conducted a similar study to analyze youth political participation in Kwara state from 2011- 2015 and found that youth in the study area engage more in formal political activities like voting than informal participation such as protests. This aligns with a recent study conducted by Iringe-koko & Adedunmola (2024) in the South-south using a quantitative method and based on political socialization theory. Conversely, some studies highlight increased youth involvement in unconventional political participation, particularly activism. This is evident in Odum's (2022) work which is based on theory of political elite. The author analyze the 2019 general election in southeastern states and findings revealed low youth political participation, with many preferring involvement in separatist groups like IPOB over lawful political activism. This trend reflects broader challenges facing Nigerian youth in politics. However, Social movements like EndSARS demonstrate the effectiveness of youth-led activism in influencing public policy and addressing contemporary issues.

Systemic Barriers and Exploitation

Nigerian politics remains dominated by older politicians who control key political positions. Young people often require endorsement from these established figures to succeed politically, yet are frequently relegated to supportive roles during elections—organizing crowds and participating in campaign rallies—only to be neglected afterward (Nnubia & Ajisebiyawo, 2024). Additionally, youth are sometimes exploited as social media operatives for political attacks or as political thugs creating civil unrest during contentious elections. Several constraints limit meaningful youth political involvement, including unemployment, illiteracy, and poverty, which deny young people the resources necessary for effective political engagement (Nnubia & Ajisebiyawo, 2024). Cultural norms further marginalize youth by reserving leadership roles for older individuals (Nnubia & Ajisebiyawo, 2024). Duruji (2021) demonstrated that youth engagement in political, social, and economic activities produces positive outcomes and enhances societal growth.

Research Gap and Theoretical Application

Despite growing literature on youth political participation in Nigeria, it is quite clear that most studies fail to apply the theoretical frameworks of political participation in understanding this phenomenon. Also based on the researchers' investigation, there is no empirical study conducted in the study area that apply the Civic Voluntarism Model. This study aims to address the theoretical gap by applying the civic voluntarism model to examine how key variables affect youth political participation in Katsina Local Government Area.

Theoretical Framework**Civic Voluntarism Model**

The Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM) is a robust theory developed by Verba et al. (1995) that explains why some people participate in political activities while others do not. The model identifies three key variables—resources, psychological engagement, and recruitment—that systematically explain factors encouraging or hindering political participation.

Resources

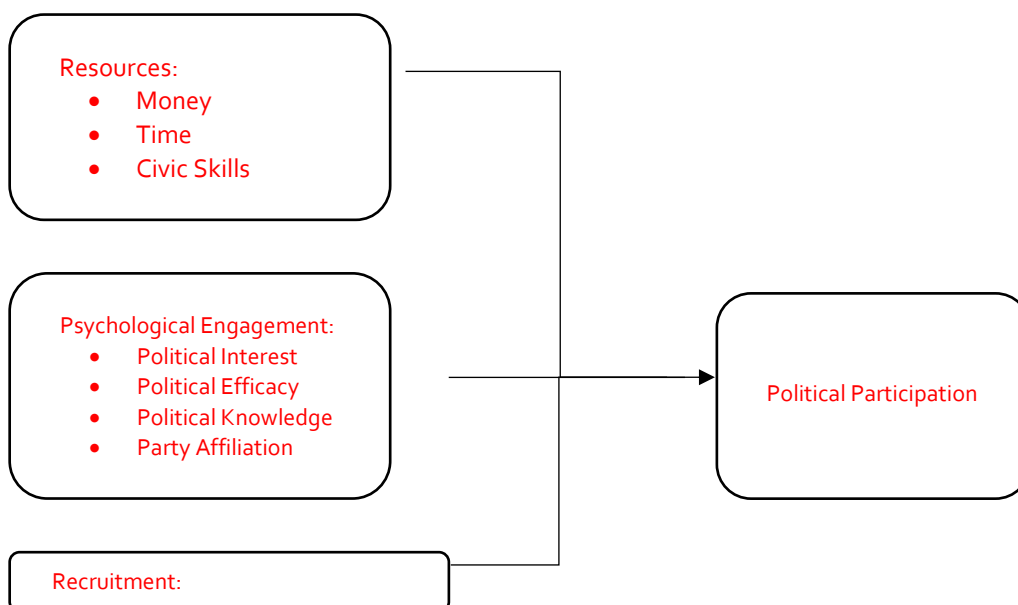
Resources are fundamental determinants of political participation, encompassing education, income, and time availability. Education provides individuals with essential civic skills including knowledge acquisition, communication abilities, and critical thinking. Those with higher education levels possess these qualities and tend to participate more actively in political activities. Similarly, individuals with higher income are more likely to participate in politics, support candidates during elections, donate to political parties, and fund campaigns. Time availability is crucial for engaging in political activities such as attending meetings, campaigning, and voting. Consequently, those with more free time are more inclined to participate compared to those with limited availability. People who possess these three resources are not only more likely to participate but also more likely to do so effectively.

Psychological Engagement

The second component consists of political knowledge, partisanship, political interest, and political efficacy. Political interest—the importance a person places on political issues—frequently acts as a catalyst for political engagement. Political efficacy refers to the belief that one's involvement matters. Political knowledge encompasses information about politics that motivates individuals to develop beliefs regarding political engagement. Partisanship describes a person's association with a political party that promotes participation. Research demonstrates that those who actively engage in political activities generally exhibit high levels of psychological engagement with politics.

Recruitment

The model's third component addresses how friends, family, or acquaintances recruit individuals into political activities within their personal networks. Political recruitment occurs in various settings that foster social networks, including organizations, workplaces, places of worship, and community involvement. These recruitment networks increase the likelihood that individuals will engage when invited or when they have close interactions with people involved in political activities.



Research Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research design to systematically investigate factors influencing youth political participation in Katsina Local Government Area through the Civic Voluntarism Model. The research was conducted in June 2025 in Katsina Local Government Area with a study population of youth aged 18-35 years. Based on the total youth population (108,000) in the study area, a sample size of 388 respondents was determined using Cochran's formula at a 95% confidence level. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed. First, four wards were purposively selected based on population density and political relevance. Within each ward, streets were selected through simple random sampling, and eligible respondents were chosen using systematic sampling at the household level.

The quantitative data was collected through a structured questionnaire divided into five sections: demographic profile, political participation, resources (education, income, time), psychological engagement (interest, efficacy, partisanship), and recruitment networks. Reliability test for this study is checked using cronbach alpha co-efficient which ranges from 0.730 to 0.917. To account for non-response and potential data loss we distributed 400 questionnaire. Out of 400 questionnaire 15 were eliminated due to incompleteness and 385

were considered valid and used for data analysis. Participants were also informed that their response will be anonymous and their participation is voluntary. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means) were used to summarize demographic and participation patterns. Inferential statistics, including multiple regression analysis, were employed to test the influence of CVM components (resources, psychological engagement, and recruitment) on political participation.

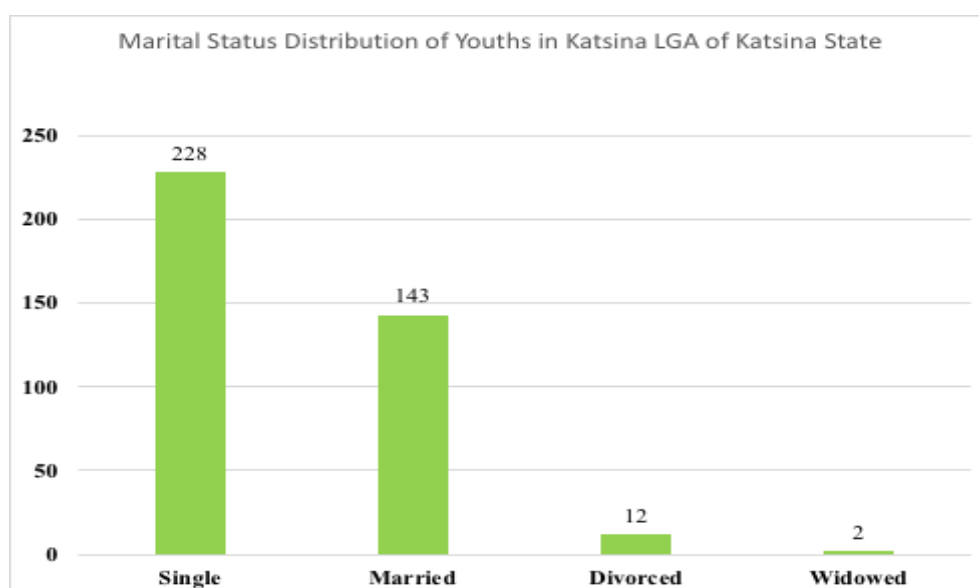
Results

Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The study sample of 385 respondents presents a detailed profile of youth in Katsina Local Government area of Katsina State. Age distribution shows a predominantly young population, with 41% aged 18–24 years and 31.9% aged 25–29 years, collectively representing nearly three-quarters (72.9%) of respondents. The remaining 27% fall within the 30–35 age bracket. Gender distribution reveals a male predominance (61.8%) compared to females (38.2%), which shows greater male participation in the study.



Marital status data indicates that most respondents are single (59.2%), followed by married individuals (37.1%), with small proportions of divorced (3.1%) and widowed (0.5%) persons.



Marital status data indicates that most respondents are single (59.2%), followed by married individuals (37.1%), with small proportions of divorced (3.1%) and widowed (0.5%) persons. Income distribution presents a diverse economic spectrum: 33% earn below ₦20,000 monthly, 25.7% earn between ₦20,000–₦50,000, 19% earn ₦51,000–₦100,000, and 22.3% earn above ₦100,000. This distribution shows that while a third of respondents fall in the lowest income category, there is reasonable representation across other income levels. Educational attainment is notably high, with 79.5% possessing tertiary education, followed by 12.2% with secondary education, and only 8.3% with primary or no formal education. The employment status breakdown reveals that 38.4% are self-employed, 30.6% are unemployed, 20.8% work in the public sector, and 10.1% in the private sector. This employment pattern suggests a significant informal sector presence alongside considerable unemployment among the youth population.

Objective 1: Influence of Resources on Youth Political Participation

To assess the influence of available resources namely education, financial capacity, and time availability on youth political participation, a composite index was created by averaging responses from three survey items: time dedicated to political activities (Q2), education influence (Q3), and financial incentive influence (Q5). This new variable, termed the Resources Index, was used as the independent variable, while political participation (Q17) served as the dependent variable.

Descriptive analysis revealed that the mean score for the Resources Index was 2.52 (SD = 0.63), suggesting that, on average, respondents reported a moderate level of resources relevant to political participation. Similarly, the mean score for electoral participation was 2.70 (SD = 1.15), indicating a moderate frequency of engagement in electoral processes among the youth in Katsina Local Government.

A Pearson Product-Moment Correlation showed a positive and statistically significant relationship between the Resources Index and political participation ($r = 0.175$, $p = 0.001$). This implies that youth with more access to education, time, and financial resources are more likely to engage in political participation, although the strength of this relationship is modest.

A simple linear regression confirmed that the regression model was statistically significant ($F(1, 383) = 12.06$, $p = 0.001$), and the R-squared value was 0.031. This indicates that resources accounted for approximately 3.1% of the variance in political participation. The regression coefficient for the Resources Index was $B = 0.319$, and the standardized beta coefficient was $\beta = 0.175$ ($p = 0.001$), suggesting a meaningful but limited influence.

Objective 2: Role of Psychological Engagement in Political Participation

This objective investigated whether psychological engagement operationalized through political interest, confidence in political efficacy, and identification with a political party bears any relationship to the political participation of youth in Katsina Local Government.

A composite psychological engagement index was created by calculating the average scores of three variables (Q7, Q8, and Q9). Descriptive statistics showed that the respondents reported a moderate level of psychological engagement ($M = 2.55$, $SD = 0.78$) and political participation ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 1.15$).

However, a Pearson correlation analysis revealed a very weak and statistically non-significant relationship between psychological engagement and political participation ($r = -0.044$, $p = 0.390$), indicating no meaningful linear association.

A simple linear regression analysis further confirmed the absence of predictive power, with the model yielding a non-significant result ($F(1, 383) = 0.740$, $p = 0.390$) and a negligible R-squared value ($R^2 = 0.002$). The regression coefficient for psychological engagement was also not significant ($B = -0.065$, $\beta = -0.044$, $p = 0.390$). These results suggest that internal political motivation alone does not significantly influence youth participation in this context.

Objective 3: Impact of Recruitment Networks on Political Participation

To examine the impact of recruitment networks such as peer influence, community involvement, and political mobilization on political participation, a composite recruitment index was computed using responses to Q14, Q15, and Q18.

Descriptive analysis revealed a moderate average recruitment score ($M = 2.58$, $SD = 0.82$), while the mean for political participation remained at 2.70 ($SD = 1.15$).

A Pearson correlation analysis revealed a moderate and statistically significant positive relationship between recruitment and participation ($r = 0.295$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that increased recruitment efforts are associated with increased political engagement.

Simple linear regression confirmed that recruitment networks significantly predict participation ($F(1, 383) = 36.49$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 8.7% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.087$). The regression coefficient was $B = 0.414$ with a standardized beta of $\beta = 0.295$ ($p < 0.001$), showing that recruitment is a meaningful driver of youth political engagement.

Objective 4: Determining the Most Significant Predictors of Youth Political Participation

A multiple linear regression was conducted to determine which of the Civic Voluntarism Model components resources, psychological engagement, or recruitment networks was the strongest predictor of political participation.

The overall model was statistically significant ($F(3, 381) = 13.81$, $p < 0.001$), accounting for 9.8% of the variance in electoral participation ($R^2 = 0.098$).

Among the predictors, recruitment networks had the strongest and most significant effect ($\beta = 0.268$, $p < 0.001$), followed by resources ($\beta = 0.102$, $p = 0.045$). Psychological engagement, however, did not significantly predict political participation ($\beta = -0.026$, $p = 0.592$).

These findings suggest that external mobilization factors such as community involvement, political outreach, and peer influence are the most influential drivers of youth political participation in Katsina Local Government.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for Index Variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean (SD)
Resources Index	385	1.00	4.00	2.52 (0.63)
Psych. Engagement Index	385	1.00	4.00	2.55 (0.78)
Recruitment Index	385	1.33	4.00	2.58 (0.82)
Political Participation	385	1	4	2.70 (1.15)

Table 3: Pearson Correlation between Indices and Political Participation

Variable	r	p-value
Resources Index	0.175	0.001
Psych. Engagement Index	-0.044	0.390
Recruitment Index	0.295	0.000

Table 4: Multiple Regression Predicting Political Participation

Predictor	B	Beta	t	p-value
Resources Index	0.186	0.102	2.010	0.045
Psychological Engagement Index	-0.039	-0.026	-0.536	0.592
Recruitment Index	0.377	0.268	5.323	0.000

Discussions

This study examined the determinants of youth political participation in Katsina Local Government of Katsina State, Nigeria, using the Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM) as a theoretical framework. The research focused on three key predictors: *resources* (education, financial capacity, and time availability), *psychological engagement* (political interest, efficacy, and partisanship), and *recruitment networks* (peer influence, community involvement, and political mobilization). The findings provide nuanced insights into the dynamics of youth political engagement in a subnational context characterized by socio-economic challenges and institutional distrust.

The regression models reveal statistically significant yet modest relationships between the Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM) components and youth political participation, collectively explaining only 9.8% of variance. While this limited explanatory power might initially seem inconsequential, it in fact highlights critical nuances about youth political engagement in Katsina. The study confirmed that resources significantly predict political participation, albeit modestly ($\beta = 0.102$, $P = 0.045$). This aligns with the CVM's assertion that material and cognitive resources reduce barriers to engagement (Verba *et al.*, 1995). In Katsina, where 33% of youth earn below ₦20,000 monthly and 30.6% are unemployed, resource disparities likely exacerbate participation gaps. Tertiary education (79.5% of respondents) emerged as a potential equalizer, facilitating political knowledge and access to civic platforms.

However, the limited variance explained (3.1%) suggests that resources alone are insufficient to drive robust participation in low-capacity environments. Contrary to Western studies (Zukin et al., 2006), psychological engagement showed no significant relationship with participation ($r = -0.044$, $p = 0.390$). This divergence may reflect contextual disillusionment among Nigerian youth, who often perceive political systems as unresponsive (Nnubia & Ajisebiyawo, 2024). Therefore although youths possess the psychological motive to engage in politics widespread distrust in political institutions might obstruct their participation. Despite moderate self-reported interest ($M = 2.55$), skepticism about efficacy and partisan loyalty likely decouples motivation from action. This challenges the universality of the CVM's psychological dimension and underscores the need to contextualize theories in settings with weak democratic consolidation. Recruitment networks emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.268$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 8.7% of participation variance which supports Verba et al (1995) arguments. In Katsina's communal setting, peer influence and local leader outreach (e.g., via religious or community gatherings) may serve as critical gateways to engagement. Recruitment networks' stronger impact (8.7% variance explained) further highlights Northern Nigeria's collectivist dynamics, where personal invitations from peers or community leaders (e.g., through religious gatherings) might prove more mobilizing than impersonal outreach. Yet the remaining unexplained variance suggests that factors like electoral violence, gender norms suppressing female participation, or elite gatekeeping in party structures further constrain engagement. Comparatively, the multiple regression model ($R^2 = 0.098$) revealed a hierarchy of influence: recruitment networks (most impactful), resources (moderate effect) and psychological engagement (negligible). This hierarchy mirrors Bratton's (2013) observations in African democracies, where external mobilization often outweighs internal motivation.

Practical Implications of Modest Explanatory Power

The modest explanatory power of our regression models, while statistically significant, reveals profound insights about the realities of youth political engagement in Katsina. When we observe that resources account for only 3.1% of participation variance, this figure takes on greater meaning when contextualized within the lived experiences of Katsina's youth population. In a local government area where one-third of young people survive on less than ₦20,000 monthly and nearly a third face unemployment, even this small percentage represents meaningful opportunities for intervention. The limited explanatory power does not indicate that resources are irrelevant, but rather that their influence operates within a constrained system where systemic barriers from economic precarity to institutional distrust subdue their full potential impact.

The practical significance becomes clearer when we consider how resource interventions might function as catalysts rather than complete solutions. For instance, a modest increase in financial stability through targeted vocational programs could create ripple effects that extend beyond the immediate 3.1% variance explained. A young person who secures steady

income through such programs may gain not just the financial means but also the confidence and social capital to engage politically. Similarly, educational attainment, while widespread in our sample, may yield greater participatory returns when combined with mentorship initiatives that help youth navigate structural barriers to engagement. The small effect size thus points to the need for precisely calibrated interventions that address resource gaps while acknowledging their limited but crucial role in a broader ecosystem of participation.

The recruitment networks' stronger but still modest 8.7% explanatory power similarly reflects both constraints and opportunities in Katsina's political landscape. In a cultural context where personal relationships and traditional authority structures mediate most social processes, this effect size suggests that mobilization efforts are powerful but operate within boundaries set by broader political realities. The unexplained variance likely encompasses factors like fear of electoral violence, gendered norms restricting women's public participation, or disillusionment with political outcomes all of which may dampen even the most effective recruitment efforts. Yet within these constraints, the demonstrated effect of recruitment points to concrete pathways for action. Community leaders and peer networks emerge as potentially high-yield channels for increasing participation, particularly when their mobilization efforts can address the trust deficits that psychological engagement measures failed to capture.

These modest R^2 values ultimately serve as both a caution and a guide for policymakers. They caution against over-reliance on any single intervention strategy, as no individual factor we measured accounts for more than a small fraction of participation patterns. Simultaneously, they guide us toward integrated approaches that combine resource empowerment with targeted mobilization while addressing the structural and cultural factors accounting for the remaining unexplained variance. In practical terms, this might translate to vocational programs that incorporate civic education, or recruitment drives that partner with trusted local institutions to mitigate distrust. The small effect sizes thus don't diminish the importance of these factors, but rather underscore the need to implement them as part of a comprehensive strategy that acknowledges the complex, multifaceted nature of political engagement in Katsina's unique context.

The modest explanatory power of our statistical models, as evidenced by R-squared values ranging from 3.1% to 9.8%, reveals important boundaries to our quantitative understanding of youth political participation in Katsina which stems from constraints of survey methodology. The substantial unexplained variance points to some factors beyond our measured variables that also shape participation. Several unmeasured but potentially significant confounders likely contribute to this explanatory gap. Institutional barriers such as opaque candidate selection processes and party gatekeeping practices may prevent otherwise motivated youth from translating resources into actual participation. Security considerations, particularly fears of electoral violence that were not measured in our survey, may suppress engagement regardless of individual resources or recruitment. Cultural norms surrounding appropriate political behavior, especially for women and younger

community members, create invisible barriers that our quantitative measures could not capture. Measurement challenges further compounded these limitations. While our psychological engagement scale demonstrated acceptable reliability, it may have missed deeper dimensions of political alienation that only ethnographic methods could reveal. Our operationalization of recruitment networks focused primarily on formal political mobilization, potentially overlooking influential informal networks like religious study groups or market associations that serve as important spaces for political socialization. The cross-sectional nature of our data presents additional interpretive constraints. Though we theorize that recruitment drives participation, the alternative possibility remains that politically active youth simply attract more mobilization attempts. This temporal ambiguity could only be resolved through longitudinal tracking of participation patterns across electoral cycles. All these limitations carry important implications for interpreting our findings. Future research would benefit from mixed-method approaches that combine quantitative tracking with qualitative exploration of the informal networks and cultural logics that our survey could not capture. Rather than undermining our conclusions, these limitations help map the complex terrain of youth political engagement in Northern Nigeria, revealing where quantitative approaches reach their interpretive boundaries and where complementary methodologies are needed

Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, the result of this study provides some fascinating insights into the discourse of youth and political participation in Katsina Local Government. While resources and recruitment networks align with theoretical expectations, the null effect of psychological engagement emphasizes the need to adapt modifying frameworks to settings with entrenched democratic weaknesses. The findings affirm that *structural* and *relational* factors (e.g., mobilization and economic empowerment) are pivotal to fostering participation, whereas *individual* motivations may remain latent without institutional reforms. By bridging theory and context, this study contributes to a more globally inclusive understanding of political behavior.

Therefore, in order to enhance youth political participation, stakeholders should adopt a multi-dimensional approach by strengthening grassroots mobilization this can be achieved through encouraging community leaders and social networks to organize youth focused forums and partnering with religious institutions and NGOs to strengthen civic outreach. In addition, government and stakeholders should expand vocational training and microfinance programs to improve financial capacity and equip them with relevant resources they need to enter into the political sphere. Nigerian government should also enhance quality civic education programs to Nigerian youth which will aid in raising their awareness about the importance of their participation. Lastly the government should as a matter of urgency promote transparency in electoral processes in order to rebuild trust in institutions and also showcase youth success stories to foster efficacy.

Notwithstanding the major contributions of this study, there are number of limitations that need to be considered. Due to time factor and money constraints this study is limited only to Katsina local government and is applicable only to the study area. Also generalization of findings is limited because a small proportion was selected from the total population. In order to generalize findings much larger samples should be taken.

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Conflict of Interest

None

Data Availability

The authors confirm that all data underlying the findings are fully available on request.

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