

Disposition to Democratic Values and Civic Engagement among Undergraduate Students in Southwest, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study examined the disposition of undergraduates towards democratic values and civic engagements in Southwest, Nigeria. Descriptive research design of the survey type was used in this study. The population of this study consisted of 872,100 undergraduate students, universities in Southwest, Nigeria. The sample for this study consisted of 1555 university undergraduates selected using multistage sampling procedure that include simple random, stratified and purposive sampling techniques. "Undergraduate Attitude towards Democratic Values and Civic Engagement Questionnaire" (UADVCEQ) was used to collect data. Face and content validity of the instrument, were ensured by experts in the fields of Social Studies Education, and Tests and Measurement in the Faculty of education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. Reliability of the instrument was ensured through test-retest method and a reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained. Data were analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequency counts, means, standard deviations, and percentages; and PPMC and multiple regression. It was reported that undergraduate have positive attitude towards democratic values but their level of engagement was high. A significant positive relationship existed between attitude toward democratic values and civic engagement among others. It was inferred that there was a general appreciation for the principles of democracy among undergraduate students Southwest, Nigeria Universities. It was recommended others that the positive attitudes toward democratic values should be strengthened by putting programmes focusing on bridging the gap between positive attitudes and practical civic engagement.*

Keywords: democratic values, democracy, civic engagement, undergraduate students

INTRODUCTION

Civic engagement is a vital component of a thriving democracy, involving the active participation of individuals and communities in the issues that concern the governance and decision-making processes of their nation. According to Anderson (2023), civic engagement is a collective effort by individuals to shape policies, values, and direction in the society and involves various activities like volunteering, advocacy, political activism, attending public meetings, and civil discourse. Beyond voting, it embodies active citizenship principles, where individuals take on responsibility for participating in the public sphere. It reflects a willingness to engage in dialogue, negotiate differences, and work collectively to address societal challenges.

Similarly, Manuwa, (2023) explained that civic engagement is crucial for democracy as it empowers the voice of people around the world, involving participation voting, being informed, and making a positive impact on the community. For example, engaging youth in areas like human rights, education, social justice, and house equity allows them to use their civic education knowledge to help those around them. According to Yusuf et al, (2020) civic education equips youth with knowledge, skills, and values necessary for effective active citizenship, fostering responsibility to improve, contribute, and solve political problems. Adeyi and Onipede (2019) posited that, civic engagement and commitments are typically measured on scales that tap the extent to which youth feel dedicated to certain goals such as serving their country and community, working diligently in harmony for the betterment of the community. As the torchbearers of the future, the youth cohort plays a pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of civic responsibilities in a democratic setting. Their attitudes toward foundational democratic principles, such as justice, equality, freedom, the rule of law, separation of powers, and respect for human rights, seem to influence their inclination to actively contribute to the civic sphere. Democratic values in Nigeria encompass range of principles and beliefs that are essential for a functioning democracy. Obiagu, Machie and Ndubuisi, (2023) identified these values to include freedom and liberty, human rights/human rights protest, corruption resistance, separation of power. In an ideal society, there are widespread comprehension of democratic values, which are an integral part of the educational framework, encompassing both objectives and results.

Among the fundamental values of Nigerian democracies lie principles such as freedom, equality, justice, acceptance of diversity, national unity, loyalty to the nation (as opposed to regional loyalties), adherence to the rule of law, the division of governmental powers, mechanisms for oversight and equilibrium, transparency, dedication to the country, respect for human dignity, representative governance, self-sufficiency, adherence to due process, the credibility of electoral processes (ensuring the votes of citizens are duly counted), pursuit of the common good, consent of the governed, recognition of the people's sovereignty, tolerance of opposing viewpoints, and the establishment of legitimacy (Nnamdi, 2009).

In the words of Obiagu, Machie and Ndubusi (2023), attitude refers to a mental and neural state of readiness. The attitude of citizens toward democratic values needs to be ascertained in order to impact their democratic behaviour and effectively resolve the Nigerian democracy issues.

This stem from the fact that attitude plays a key role in predicting or producing behaviours. In the same vein, knowing students' attitude towards democratic values will answer whether students are ready to apply the learnt democratic principles to practice, and also inform the transformation of democracy education.

An evaluation of youth participation and democratic governance in Nigeria's fourth republic was conducted by Ukahimi, Olawale and Olotu (2022). The researcher employed the historical research method to provide a detailed background of youth participation in Nigeria's politics, stimulating effects of their participation on the democratic governance and factors militating against younger generation involvement in democratic activities. The researcher made use of textbooks, journals, government publications, conference, seminar lecture materials and internet to gather data for the study. It was reported that over the years, the youths have been relegated to the background and hence, it has resulted to all manner of drawbacks on the country's democratic governance. This study lacks empirical statistics to ascertain the level of contributions or relationship that could be apportioned to youth involvement in the country's democratic development.

The value and indispensability of justice in the quest for development of Africa was examined by Olatunji (2015) and he considered justice as one of the essential democratic values and the researcher noted that it discussion cannot be questioned in any modern society. The research examined justice and its significance as a sacred issue in the governance of human societies towards enduring development using the descriptive analytic method. It was reported that reduction in social inequality and liberation from oppression must be achieved in order to guarantee justice. It was equally submitted that only a positive attitude towards moral order and respect can provide the kind of genuine social order that man require in order to realize his full personal and social development. This study clearly failed to provide verifiable evidence on how the justice factor has influence the engagement of youth in the Nigeria democratic governance.

Writing on participation in policy process, Okafor (2023) noted that civic engagement process in the country have been constrained thereby resulting in low public participation in governance and public policy process. This implies that civic engagement is instrumental to achieving functioning democracies where government and citizens are required to work together to address issues of public concern. The researcher submitted that exclusion of citizens from governance has negative consequence on the country's progress and stability. It was recommended that engagement platform and space should be expanded. This submission notwithstanding, this research was not able to identify the extent to which youths especially undergraduates are excluded or engaged in civic matters. It equally failed to point out the factors responsible for the exclusion of the citizens in the governance process.

In a study conducted in the Northern part of the country, Adamu, Egan and Kantikoy (2021) conducted an assessment of undergraduate youth's perception towards democratic values in Jos North with a view to identifying the implications on social studies education. Survey research design was adopted in the study with two hundred and forty undergraduate participants. That participants responded to a questionnaire designed by the researchers and data were analyzed using mean score and chi-square. Finding from the study revealed that

undergraduate youths have strong and positive perception towards democratic values and the perception to the value of respect and tolerance in the political process in Jos North, Plateau State was positive. A significant difference was reported in perception of youths to the virtues of honesty and patriotism in the democratic values but they were not comprehensive enough as it seems the researcher only considered those values peculiar and relevance to the study area. In a study more recent study, Obiagu, Machie and Ndubuisi (2023) investigated university students' attitudes towards political participation and democratic values in Nigeria with a critical implication on democracy education. The study was delimited to attitude to democratic values such as freedom and liberty, human right/ human right protest, corruption resistance, and separation of powers in Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was employed while a questionnaire was used in collecting data from 250 participants. Findings from the study revealed that university students reported an unwillingness to protest human right violations as well as the tendency to accept bribes and campaign for a wrong political candidate for financial gains. This was in spite of general findings that indicated positive attitudes towards democratic values among university students. This study focused mainly on attitude towards selected democratic values expected to guide any democratic system is expected to be all encompassing. Hence, the needs for more variables.

Combining knowledge and attitude, Olorunda (2019) examined civic knowledge and attitude as determinant of student's civic engagement in secondary schools in Oyo state, Nigeria using the descriptive research design of the survey type. The sample is used in the study comprised 600 public secondary school students selected from rural and urban areas through multi stage procedures. Data were collected from the participants using a closed ended questionnaire designed by the researcher finding from the study revealed students' civic knowledge and engagement was moderate while their attitude towards civic engagement was negative. This study is one sided in that it failed to point out factors that shaped the level of students' engagement in civic activities. The finding from this study may not be applicable to university undergraduates because of the variation in the participant level of freedom.

Empirical review indicated that understanding attitude towards values is essential to predicting behaviours and tendency to act in a specific way (Obiagu, Machie & Ndubusi, 2023). Some of the existing literature though employed descriptive methods, vary in design for instance, while Ukahimi, Olawale and Olotu (2022) employed historical methods, Olatunji (2015) and Okafor (2023) used descriptive analytic method without quantitative values to back up the submission.

Statement of the problem

Despite the existence of curriculum design towards the development of democratic values and cultivation of civic practices in Nigerian universities, there seems to be lack of understanding about the relationship between attitudes towards democratic values, such as justice, liberties and freedom of expression, respect for the rule of law, respect for human rights, accountability and transparency, patriotism, and tolerance, and levels of civic engagement among university undergraduates.

In the premise of this problem, understanding the attitudes of undergraduates towards justice, liberties and freedom of expression, respect for the rule of law, respect for human rights, accountability and transparency, patriotism, and tolerance within the Nigerian democratic

context is essential for identifying barriers and opportunities for enhancing their participation in civic affairs and promoting a vibrant democracy. However, despite the importance of civic engagement to the development and sustainability of democratic society, it is disheartening to note that Nigeria youth population is not fully engaged with community development, their attitude towards civic engagement does not support the roles of participation in community development, most of the students are not committed to community participation and it has invariably become a matter of great concern to people of Nigeria

Purpose of the study

The purposes of the study were to:

1. examined the attitude of university undergraduates towards democratic values in Southwest, Nigeria;
2. determined the level of university undergraduates' civic engagement in Southwest, Nigeria; and
3. examined the relationship between undergraduates' attitude towards democratic values and civic engagement

Research Questions

1. What is the attitude of university undergraduates towards democratic values in Southwest, Nigeria?
2. What is the level of civic engagement among university undergraduates in Southwest, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

1. There is no significant relationship between attitude towards democratic values and civic engagement among the university undergraduates.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research design of the survey type was used in this study. This involved description of the existing situation as regards the relationships between the attitudes towards democratic values and undergraduates' civic engagement in Southwest, Nigeria. The population of this study consisted of 872,100 male and female undergraduates from 17 public and 27 private universities in Southwest, Nigeria (NUC, 2024). The sample for this study consisted of 1560 university undergraduates who were selected using multistage sampling procedure. In the first stage, three out of the six states that make up Southwest, Nigeria were selected using simple random sampling technique. The second stage involved the use of stratified sampling technique to select two universities (one federal and one state). The stratification was based on the ownership of the universities. The third stage involved the selection of 260 undergraduates in each of the selected universities using simple sampling technique.

For this investigation, the researcher designed one instrument titled 'Undergraduates Attitude towards Democratic Values and Civic Engagement Questionnaire' (UADVCEQ) to collect relevant data. To ascertain the face and content validity of the instrument, copies of the instrument were subjected to thorough scrutiny by experts in the fields of Social Studies

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Education, and Tests and Measurement in the Faculty of education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. Reliability of the UADVCEQ was established using a test-retest method. The copies of the instrument were administered on 30 respondents who were not part of the sample but within the population. At the interval of two weeks, the copies of the instrument were re-administered on the same set of people. The data obtained from the two trial tests were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and a reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained. Thus, the instrument was adjudged reliable. The instrument was administered by the researcher with the help of a trained research assistant in each of the selected universities. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, means, standard deviations and percentages were used to answer the research questions. Inferential statistics such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Question 1: What is the attitude of university undergraduates towards democratic values in Southwest, Nigeria?

To determine attitude of university undergraduates towards democratic values in Southwest, Nigeria (Positive or Negative) scores of item 1-35 in section B of UADVCEQ were subjected to frequency count, percentage and mean rating. The negative attitude was determined by scores below the mean cut off point ($x < 2.50$, i.e $x = 1.00-2.49$ while the positive was determined by the mean cut off and above ($x > 2.50$, i.e $x = 2.50-4.00$). The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequency counts and Mean rating of attitude of university undergraduates towards democratic values in Southwest, Nigeria

<i>Item</i>	<i>SA</i>		<i>A</i>		<i>D</i>		<i>SD</i>		<i>Mea n</i>	<i>Remark</i>
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>		
I do not like jungle justice	858	55.4	273	17.6	186	12.0	231	14.9	3.14	<i>Positive</i>
Court is the best place to seek redress for injustice	879	57.9	567	36.6	57	3.7	27	1.7	3.51	<i>Positive</i>
Both parties should be heard before passing judgment	1056	68.2	432	27.9	15	1.0	45	2.9	3.61	<i>Positive</i>
Crimes of any type should be reported to the law enforcement agencies	735	47.5	492	31.8	297	19.2	24	1.6	3.25	<i>Positive</i>
I believe suspects should not be kept in police custody for a long time	804	51.9	486	31.4	192	12.4	66	4.3	3.31	<i>Positive</i>
It is not good to keep quiet when one's liberty is denied	861	55.6	513	34.3	60	3.9	96	6.2	3.39	<i>Positive</i>
Socioeconomic status should not stop one from making his opinion known	792	51.2	492	31.8	105	6.8	159	10.3	3.24	<i>Positive</i>
Those in position of authority should not enjoy more freedom than others	852	55.0	372	24.0	315	20.3	9	0.6	3.34	<i>Positive</i>

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Freedom of speech should always be tolerated	798	51.6	561	36.2	111	7.2	78	5.0	3.34	<i>Positive</i>
Freedom of the press must be encouraged	762	49.2	465	30.0	222	14.3	99	6.4	3.22	<i>Positive</i>
The judiciary should be free from manipulations	678	43.8	777	50.2	15	1.0	78	5.0	3.33	<i>Positive</i>
Law is applied fairly in Nigeria	138	9.1	180	11.9	702	46.5	489	32.4	1.98	<i>Negative</i>
The Nigerian police is professional in enforcing the law	543	36.3	450	30.1	225	15.0	279	18.6	2.84	<i>Positive</i>
There is no partiality in the justice system	342	22.1	645	41.7	297	19.2	264	17.1	2.69	<i>Positive</i>
Everybody should be treated equally under the law	699	45.2	672	43.4	162	10.5	15	1.0	3.33	<i>Positive</i>
I am concerned about my basic rights	861	55.6	549	35.5	123	7.9	15	1.0	3.46	<i>Positive</i>
I know when human right is being violated	381	24.6	600	38.8	378	24.4	189	12.2	2.76	<i>Positive</i>
I can approach the court if my right is trampled upon	552	35.7	540	34.9	279	18.0	177	11.4	2.95	<i>Positive</i>
I do not mind the rigorous court process	525	34.0	468	30.3	330	21.4	222	14.4	2.84	<i>Positive</i>
I can direct people with human right challenge to the human right commission	552	35.7	744	48.2	69	4.5	180	11.7	3.08	<i>Positive</i>
Public officer can do without stealing	306	19.8	486	31.5	327	21.2	426	27.6	2.43	<i>Negative</i>
It is wrong to receive gratification before voting	564	36.5	429	27.8	330	21.4	222	14.4	2.86	<i>Positive</i>
It is wrong to pay to get employment/contract	426	28.9	768	52.0	150	10.2	132	8.9	3.01	<i>Positive</i>
It is wrong to buy gift for a civil servant in order to get a service/favour from him/her	939	60.8	426	27.6	99	6.4	81	5.2	3.44	<i>Positive</i>
It is wrong to use public office for personal gains	861	57.2	483	32.1	36	2.4	126	8.4	3.38	<i>Positive</i>
I love my country	966	62.5	387	25.0	168	10.9	24	1.6	3.49	<i>Positive</i>
I am passionate about serving Nigeria (NYSC)	681	44.1	426	27.6	324	21.0	114	7.4	3.08	<i>Positive</i>
I can join the Nigeria defense agency anytime	348	22.6	240	15.6	603	39.2	348	22.6	2.38	<i>Positive</i>
I cheerfully support Nigeria representatives in international competitions	702	46.0	447	29.3	267	17.5	111	7.3	3.14	<i>Positive</i>
I pay taxes and other charges expected of me	522	33.8	678	43.9	204	13.2	141	9.1	3.02	<i>Positive</i>
I am not always bordered by threat to my interest	816	54.2	480	31.9	69	4.6	141	9.4	3.31	<i>Positive</i>

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I support a party because majority of my tribe are members	492	31.8	720	46.6	285	18.4	48	3.1	3.07	Positive
I do not only vote for people from my political unit	822	55.0	324	21.7	333	22.3	15	1.0	3.31	Positive
I relate well with people irrespective of their cultural background	495	32.0	600	38.8	291	18.8	159	10.3	2.93	Positive
I support candidates in an election without minding their religion	669	43.3	408	26.4	321	20.8	147	9.5	3.03	Positive
Grand Mean = 3.10										

The information contained in Table 1 above showed the attitude of university undergraduates towards democratic values in Southwest, Nigeria Considering the mean cut off point of 2.50, university undergraduates had positive attitude towards 33 out of the 35 items in table 1 above and negative attitude towards two out of the 35 items. Considering the grand mean of 3.10 that fall within the mean cut off point of 2.50-4.00, the overall attitude of university undergraduates towards democratic values in Southwest, Nigeria was considered positive.

Question 2: What is the level of civic engagement among university undergraduates in Southwest, Nigeria?

To determine the level of civic engagement among university undergraduates in southwest, Nigeria (high, moderate or low), scores of item 1-20 of section C of UADVCEQ was subjected to frequency count, percentage and mean rating. The low level was determined by scores below the mean cut off point (2.50 i.e $x = 1.00-2.49$) while the moderate level was determined by the mean cut off point ($x = 2.50-2.99$). The high level was determined by the score above the mean cut off point ($x > 2.50$, i.e $x = 3.00-4.00$). The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Frequency counts and Mean rating of the level of civic engagement among university undergraduates in southwest, Nigeria

<i>Items</i>	<i>A</i>		<i>S</i>		<i>R</i>		<i>N</i>		<i>Mean</i>	<i>Remark</i>
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>		
Register to vote during election	438	29.1	603	40.0	366	24.3	99	6.6	2.92	Moderate
Vote during national election	294	19.0	528	34.2	654	42.3	69	4.5	2.68	Moderate
Vote during local election	315	20.4	228	14.8	672	43.5	330	21.4	2.34	Low
Campaign for candidate during election	270	17.5	168	10.9	780	50.5	327	21.2	2.25	Low
Wear my party souvenir	132	8.5	306	19.8	549	35.5	558	36.1	2.10	Low
Donate money to support candidate during election	162	10.5	267	17.3	492	31.8	624	40.4	1.98	Low
Sign public petition online	150	9.7	132	8.5	468	30.3	795	51.5	1.77	Low

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Sign public petition offline	201	13.5	126	8.5	474	31.8	690	46.3	1.89	Low
Join protest against unpleasant public occurrence	159	10.3	57	3.7	765	49.5	564	36.5	1.88	Low
Join protest against anti-human policy	192	12.4	90	5.8	759	49.1	504	32.6	1.98	Low
Contact political representatives on issues of public concern	48	3.1	192	12.4	801	51.8	504	32.6	1.86	Low
Contribute to debate on television/radio	156	10.1	21	1.4	846	54.8	522	33.8	1.88	Low
Join discussion of economic policy on social media	189	12.2	513	33.2	312	20.2	531	34.4	2.23	Low
Support non-governmental organization	165	10.7	564	36.5	459	29.7	357	23.1	2.35	Low
Support advocacy group	75	4.9	108	7.0	921	59.6	441	28.5	1.88	Low
Join in monitoring public expenditure	177	11.5	18	1.2	783	50.7	567	36.7	1.87	Low
Raising fund for the needy	219	14.2	438	28.3	381	24.7	507	32.8	2.24	Low
Create awareness on health issues	342	22.2	222	14.4	429	27.9	546	35.5	2.23	Low
Volunteer for community development projects	186	12.0	195	12.6	768	49.7	396	25.6	2.11	Low
Join anti-corruption campaign	126	8.2	468	30.3	510	33.0	441	28.5	2.18	Low

Grand Mean = 2.13

Key: f = frequency; % = percentage of respondents; A = Always, S = Sometimes; R = Rarely; N = Never.

The information contained in Table 2 showed the level of civic engagement among university undergraduates in southwest, Nigeria. Considering the mean cut off point of 2.50, the level of civic engagement among university undergraduates in southwest, Nigeria was considered moderate in two out of the 20 items in table 2 above. Civic engagement among university undergraduates was considered low in 18 out of the 20 items. Considering the grand mean of 2.13 that fall within the mean cut off point of 1.00-2.49, the overall level of civic engagement among university undergraduates in southwest, Nigeria was considered low.

Research Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between attitude towards democratic values and civic engagement among the university undergraduates.

To test this hypothesis, scores on attitude towards democratic values and civic engagement among the university undergraduates were collated and subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: PPMC showing relationship between attitude towards democratic values and civic engagement among the university undergraduates

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	r _{cal}	p-value
Attitude to democratic values	1548	107.78	10.368	0.165*	0.000
Civic engagement	1548	42.29	9.051		

P < 0.05 (Significant Result)

The information contained in Table 3 shows that $r_{cal} = 0.165$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. Since the p value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between attitude towards democratic values and civic engagement among the university undergraduates.

Discussion

Finding from this study showed that the overall attitude of university undergraduates towards democratic values in Southwest, Nigeria was positive. This implies that undergraduates had positive disposition to the justice system, reporting crime to law enforcement agencies, equality of all before the laws of the land, freedom of expression, and would go through the legally recognized process in seeking redress for trampled rights. The implication also include that the undergraduates will support Nigerian representatives in international competition, willingly join the Nigeria defense if needed, pay taxes and charges without been coerced among others. The positive disposition towards democratic values could be attributed to the increasing national consciousness among the youths and the fact that youths' voices are now been heard due to the influence of social media. This finding contradicts the position of Adeniji and Odeyemi (2023), concerns over prevalent youth political disengagement and negative perceptions within many democracies. The finding equally portrayed an improvement in the disposition of youths' to the political process as expressed by Adedokun and Oluwagbohunmi (2014) that majority of the youths are incapacitated. The finding further contradicted the position of Okafor (2023) who noted that civic engagement process in the country have been constrained thereby resulting in low public participation in governance and public policy process. Conversely, the finding agrees with Kantikoy (2021) report in a study conducted in Jos North of Nigeria that undergraduate youths have strong and positive perception towards democratic values.

It was found in the study that the overall level of civic engagement among university undergraduates in Southwest, Nigeria was low. The implication of this is that, majority of the undergraduate youths do not vote during local and national elections, scarcely campaign for candidate or party during elections. It equally implies that they scarcely join in monitoring government expenditure, support government organization, join discussion of economic policy on social media or contact political representatives on issues of public concern. This finding could have resulted from the lack of trust in the governance process and the incessant

suppression of dissenting voices in the country. This finding agreed with Ojo (2003) who posited that both the elites and youths have surprisingly shown weak commitment to basic symbols and values of democracy. It equally aligned with the finding of Obiagu, Machie and Ndubuisi (2023) that university students reported an unwillingness to protest human right violations as well as the tendency to accept bribes and campaign for a wrong political candidate for financial gains. It equally corroborated that position of Okafor (2023) that citizens' engagement in the political process is still rated below appreciable level in Nigeria.

Finding also revealed that there was significant relationship between attitude towards democratic values and civic engagement among the university undergraduates. This implies that the attitudinal disposition of undergraduates towards the justice system, reporting crime to law enforcement agencies, equality of all before the laws of the land, freedom of expression could contribute to their level of engagement in civic duties such as voting during election among others. This finding could be have resulted from the gradual realization that civic engagement is instrumental to achieving functioning democracies where government and citizens are required to work together to address issues of public concern. This finding affirmed the submission of Olatunji (2015) and Ukahimi, Olawale and Olotu (2022). Olatunji (2015) submitted that only a positive attitude towards moral order and respect can provide the kind of genuine social order that man requires in order to realize his full personal and social development. Ukahimi, Olawale and Olotu (2022) reported that over the years, the youths have been relegated to the background and hence, it has resulted to all manner of drawbacks on the country's democratic governance. The report is at variance with the position of Olorunda (2019) that students' civic knowledge engagement was negative.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the study concludes that democratic principles well instituted in Southwest, Nigeria this make university undergraduates to exhibit positive attitude towards democratic values, however, this study also underscore the level of civic engagement among the university undergraduates in southwest which can inform efforts to improve their participation. It was also concluded that there was relationship between university undergraduates' attitude towards democratic attitudes and engagement in civic duties

Recommendations

1. The attitudes toward democratic values should be strengthened by putting in place programmes focusing on bridging the gap between positive attitudes and practical civic engagement. Such programmes integrate civic education into their curricula, emphasizing democratic values such as justice, freedom of expression, rule of law, respect for human rights, accountability, and transparency.
2. Universities should embrace experiential learning by encouraging undergraduates to participate in activities such as debates, model government simulations, and community service projects that provide practical experiences to improve their civic responsibilities.
3. Tasks that require collaborative efforts should be encouraged among the undergraduates, as this could foster the spirit of tolerance and sense of belongingness.
4. Advocacy and awareness campaigns should be designed to underscore the importance of active civic engagement, leveraging the positive attitudes toward democratic values to motivate practical involvement in civic and political activities.

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