

**GENDER AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AMONG UNIVERSITY OF
LAGOS STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDENTS'
ASSOCIATION 2023 ELECTION**

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ABSTRACT

Participation of females in politics is essential for effective democracy. This study portrays the relationship between gender and political participation among University of Lagos students using the Social Sciences' Student Association 2023 election as a case study. Prior research has explored gender disparity in politics and strategies to amend this, but this research focuses on gender disparity among University of Lagos students to examine if the university as an agent of socialisation is able to influence the female gender to participate more in student politics, shape political attitudes of future leaders, and support the development of initiatives promoting gender equity in student politics. Given youth's role as political change agents, their political behaviour and participation are crucial to study. Questionnaire and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) were used to gather and analyse data gotten from respondents. The research showed that despite an unbiased university system, there remains a significant relationship between the two variables; the male counterpart still seems more politically active and involved than the female counterpart. The research identified the factors contributing to these gender differences and strategies to increase the level of female participation in student politics.

INTRODUCTION

Political participation refers to voluntary involvement of citizens in political processes and activities which helps to bring about changes in their society; it is a major determinant of a vibrant democratic government and an indispensable feature of democracy (Van Deth, 2016). It enables citizens to engage in decision-making processes and politics that affect their lives, which is the bedrock of democracy. Participation is the principal means by which consent is granted or withdrawn in a democracy and rulers are made accountable to the ruled. Hence any show of interest in activities involves

allocation of value, and policies and political affairs can be seen as political participation (Halder and Campbell-Phillips, 2020). According to Lipset (1960, p. 180), political participation includes "leadership in national affairs, local leadership, acting as an organisation member and informal opinion leadership among one's associates".

Gender is believed to be socially constructed (Bammeke, 2002) hence, it is a fundamental aspect of social identity that influences individuals' opportunity to participate in various spheres of life,

including politics. As in many other developing countries, including Nigeria, women's participation in politics is generally low despite constituting 49.2% of the population (Jegade, 1994 in Gbadebo, 2015). Gender also refers to the social and cultural characteristics that distinguish male from female. According to Agomo (2004) it is the differences between men and women as imposed by society. It is not inborn: rather, it is learned and natured as part of the socialization process and it defines their role within individual society (Oyekanmi, 2004). Section 15(2), Section 42(1) and Section 17(3) of Nigeria's constitution of 1999 as amended, provides for gender equality and non-discrimination. However, according to a report by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (2021), after the 2019 legislative elections, the Nigerian Senate elected 8 women (7.34%) out of 109 members and the House of Representatives elected only 13 women (3.61%) out of 360 members. These figures are considerably lower than the global average set in the 1995 Beijing Declaration and platform for action to which Nigeria is a signatory which states that 30% of all positions in government and government-owned concerns or institutions should be given to women. As such, this policy is not yet to be implemented in Nigeria (Anifowose 2004). Women know their situation best; they should participate equally with men to have their perspective effectively represented at all levels of decision-making in their society (Miranda 2005).

The University of Lagos popularly as UNILAG is one of the top universities in Nigeria, with a diverse student body

from different social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. The UNILAG is situated in Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria. It is a public institution that has various faculties, including the Faculty of Social Sciences, which provides a diverse range of courses to students with 17,662 female and 17,764 male undergraduate students. The Faculty of Social Sciences is one of the faculties in the university, with over 3,000 undergraduate students enrolled in various programs. The imbalance in gender representation in politics is not limited to the national level alone but is also evident in tertiary institutions and UNILAG is not an exception.

From perspective notion from students, there is a notion of feeling that female are underrepresented as they are ascriptive to certain positions in the politics of Social Sciences Student Association (SOSSA) and female students remain underrepresented in political leadership positions as the faculty of social sciences for instance has never had a female president and a female general secretary. This situation has led to calls for research to understand the factors that hinder female political participation in the University of Lagos students. While there is limited research specifically focused on political participation among University of Lagos, further research is needed to understand why political activities are generally low among students, especially the female students. This research focuses specifically on gender and political participation among the University of Lagos students looking at their participation in student politics using SOSSA 2023 student election as case study.

The primary objective of this study is to explore the factors that influence gender differences in political participation among students in the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lagos. The study will focus on the following research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between gender and political participation among undergraduates in the Faculty of Social Sciences?
2. Are there factors that contribute to gender differences in political participation in the Faculty of Social Sciences?
3. What strategies can increase the level of political participation of female students at the University of Lagos?

Research Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between Gender and Participation among University of Lagos Student

H₁: There is significant relationship between Gender and Participation among University of Lagos Student

LITERATURE REVIEW

Political Participation

Political participation is a basic concept in political science, and different scholars have defined it in different ways. There are different dimensions to political participation in every political environment. Political participation may be defined as the actions of private citizens by which they seek to influence or support government and politics (Milbrath & Goel, 1977). Therefore, just like Van Deth (2016) has said, political

participation is action-oriented, and this action varies. Similarly, Halder and Campbell-Phillips (2020) define political participation as a process through which political decisions are made; therefore, participation influences policymakers and sometimes determines governmental policies. Political participation is closely connected with political awareness. It is important to note that political awareness is the very basis of political participation (Ekman & Amnå, 2012). Given Van Deth's (2016) and Milbrath's (1965) features of political participation, we can say that political participation is an activity. It is voluntary in a democratic setting, and these activities involve people in their role as nonprofessionals or amateurs and not, say, as politicians, civil servants, or lobbyists.

Milbrath (1965) in his book "Political Participation" analyzed the hierarchy of political participation and identified three different forms/stages. Therefore, we can determine how politically active a person is by looking at the political activism in which they engage. The three stages, according to Milbrath (1965), are Spectator, Transitional, and Gladiatorial. The Spectator activities can be seen as the lowest form, connoting from the name that most people who engage and limit themselves to these political activities are mostly spectators. They don't do much, but it is more of the starting point of being politically active. According to Milbrath (1965), it involves exposing oneself to political stimuli, voting, initiating a political discussion, attempting to talk another into voting in a certain way, wearing a button, or putting a sticker on the car.

The next form is the Transitional activities. Anyone who performs or gets involved in activities like this is said to be more involved in the politics of such a society/state. Activities categorized in the Transitional Activities include making a monetary contribution to a party or candidate, attending a political meeting or rally, contributing time to a political campaign, becoming an active member of a political party, attending a caucus or a strategy meeting, and soliciting political funds. The highest form is the Gladiatorial activities, which is the apex of all political participation. People who involve themselves in activities like becoming a candidate for office or holding public and party office partake in Gladiatorial activities.

GENDER AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Gender inequality is viewed as despicable, dysfunctional, and hence repulsive in most parts of the world, yet it is a reality of life and a contentious matter of heated intellectual debate (Akinboye, 2004). In Nigeria, there is a significant gender disparity in political representation; the male gender controls governance (Ikpe, 2004). Gender and sex are sometimes used interchangeably to describe the biological distinctions between men and women, but gender is much more than that. It is a social, cultural, religious, and customary construction of gender roles. Gender refers to the socially imposed differences between males and females; they are not born with it, unlike sex, but they learn it as part of their socialization process (Agomo, 2004), and the university, which is a school, is part of that agent of socialization process (Babawale, 2015). Gender, according to Oyekanmi (2004), is the role played by

males and females within each society, including the political sphere. According to Ikpe (2004), males play the subordinate role, and females play the complementary role. The role of males is to participate and lead, while females are mostly confined to spectator activities. Most women who go beyond spectator activities are often treated with disdain and are not equally treated as their male counterparts (Ikpe, 2004).

Both males and females have equal political rights; however, this does not mean that females will automatically gain equal influence with males in politics (Anifowose, 2004). Analyzing this gender description is appropriate for defining how gender interacts in Nigerian society. (Ikpe, 2004), and this emphasizes a patriarchal attitude, which is an obstacle to social and economic development pa (Oyekanmi, 2004), whereby patriarchy is described by Oyekanmi (2004) as the distribution of power and resources in a manner that men maintain power and control of the resources, while women are powerless and dependent on men. This inequality can be traced back to the pre-colonial era and has found its way into the post-colonial era in Nigeria, and we can also see it manifesting in the educational system (Ikpe, 2004). It is important to note that there has always been a gender gap in student participation and representation in student leadership positions in Nigerian colleges. According to data acquired between 1998 and 2003 (Iloh, 2018), female students are significantly less involved and represented than their male counterparts. It reached 11% female representation percentage between the 1970s and the 1990s. a 'tokenish' rise in

engagement between the 1990s and 2000s, as defined by Wale Olaitan (1998, p80). It barely increased to 22% and continues to range between 9% and 22%. This 'tokenish' involvement and representation hasn't made things better because there is still a glaring lack of understanding of the importance of gender balance in student unionism and politics. Even among the female students themselves, there is a loss of consciousness (Olaitan, 1998).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Political culture theory to spotlight the problem of women's under-representation in politics and relate it to the university, using the Faculty of Social Sciences as a case study. Political culture theory explores the relationship between individuals and their political system, examining the attitudes, values, and beliefs that shape their political behaviour. Applying this theory to gender and political participation among the University of Lagos students would involve analysing the shared norms and beliefs related to gender roles and politics within this specific context. This theory is suitable for explaining gender and political participation among the University of Lagos students because it focuses on individual orientations about the political process and explains why females do not participate in student politics as much as males do.

The concept of culture refers to that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs, and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Babawale, 2015). According to Swedlow (2013, p. 624), "If politics poses the question of who gets what,

when, and how, then political culture supplies a big part of the answer; if politics is the art of the possible, then political culture helps define the limits of that art." To him, culture defines what is generally permissible in a given society.

Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba, in their book "The Civic Culture" (1963), classified political culture into three, namely:

i. Participant Culture

ii. Subject Culture

iii. Parochial Culture

According to Almond and Verba (1963), the parochial culture comprises those who are unfamiliar with the political system. A parochial citizen has few demands made of them by the political elite and has little hope of receiving them. They participate in little to no political activities. This type is found in many traditional societies (Babawale, 2015). According to Babawale, the subject citizen is a passive one who is involved but passively. Although they play no part in the input and don't think they have any effect on the government, they are aware of the government's output in terms of welfare programs, tax legislation, and other areas. The final and most active group is the participants. According to Almond and Verba, participants are those who are encouraged to actively participate in the decision-making process and who are aware of both the input and output of government.

METHODOLOGY

The study area for this research is the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lagos. The University of Lagos, also referred to as UNILAG, is a public

university that was established in Lagos, Nigeria, in 1962. The Faculty of Social Sciences is one of the 12 faculties in the University of Lagos. Under it are 7 departments that offer social science courses in economics, mass communication, political science, sociology, social work, geography and psychology. The 2023 Social Sciences Student Association election will serve as the specific context for examining political participation among the students. This election holds significant importance as it provides an opportunity to explore the students' engagement in the political process, their perceptions of the electoral system, and the barriers they may face in participating actively.

According to the 2019/2020 University of Lagos pocket statistics, the Faculty of Social Sciences has 3956 students, 2164 female and 1792 male. Specifically, the selected group, in the opinion of the researcher, are those who are most able to respond to the different issues raised by this study, and this question will assist the researcher in achieving the objectives established in this work. The study population will consist of both male and female students, representing different genders within the Faculty of Social Sciences. The sample size for this study is three hundred and sixty-three (363) respondents using Yamane's formula. The sample size selected was designed to obtain adequate and diverse information on the level of participation of both male and female students. A simple random sampling method is adopted. The method of data collection for this research is a questionnaire, through Google Forms. Structured

questionnaires will be issued to the respondents

Based on the responses to the questions in the returned surveys, data gathered from respondents will be analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) tool. Both inferential and descriptive statistics will be calculated in this case; inferential statistics will involve establishing the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, while descriptive statistics will involve presenting and analyzing respondents' opinions in charts and tables.

To ensure ethical standards is uphold throughout the research process, informed consent will be obtained from all participants, emphasizing their right to partake and not partake in the research. The participants' confidentiality will be maintained by ensuring anonymity in the data analysis and reporting.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The online survey was conducted using Google Forms, aiming for 363 respondents. However, the survey received an overwhelming response of 366 participants. After cleaning the data in Excel to handle missing values and multiple inputs, 359 responses were deemed relevant and utilised for this study. To analyse the data, this study employed the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis involved conducting a Pearson correlation test to explore relationships between variables and using descriptive statistics to analyze other aspects.

ANALYSIS OF THE DEMOGRAPHY
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

GENDER					
		Frequen cy	Percen t	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Vali d	Male	174	48.5	48,5	29.0
	Fema le	185	51.5	51.5	100.0
	Total	359	100.0	100.0	

Conducting a gender demographic analysis allows us to understand the role of gender in various aspects of life. For instance, in the context of employment and education, it can reveal potential disparities in access and opportunities.

By evaluating the gender distribution in a given sample, policymakers and organizations can identify areas where targeted interventions might be needed to promote gender equality and inclusivity.

AGE					
		Frequen cy	Percen t	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Vali d	17-20	61	17.0	17.0	17.0
	21-23	156	43.5	43.5	60.4
	24-26	108	30.1	30.1	90.5
	27 and above	34	9.5	9.5	100.0
	Total	359	100.0	100.0	

The dataset exhibits a diverse age distribution, encompassing respondents from various age groups. The majority of respondents fall into the age brackets of 21-23, constituting 43.5% (156 respondents) of the total sample. The second most prominent group is the 24-26 age range, comprising 30.1% (108 respondents). The youngest age group,

17-20, represents 17.0% (61 respondents) of the sample. Lastly, the oldest age group, 27 and above, constitutes 9.5% (34 respondents). Analyzing age demographics is crucial for understanding how different age groups might have distinct preferences, needs, and perspectives.

DEPARTMENT					
		Frequen cy	Percen t	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Economics	56	15.6	15.6	15.6

Valid	Mass Communication	102	28.4	28.4	44.0
	Political Science	95	26.5	26.5	70.5
	Sociology	22	6.1	6.1	76.6
	Psychology	35	9.7	9.7	86.4
	Geography	19	5.3	5.3	91.6
	Social work	30	8.4	8.4	100.0
	Total	359	100.0	100.0	

The dataset exhibits a diverse distribution of respondents across different academic departments in the social science faculty in the University of Lagos. The most represented department is Mass Communication, accounting for 28.4% (102 respondents) of the total sample. Political Science closely follows, comprising 26.5% (95 respondents). Economics represents 15.6% (56

respondents), while Psychology and Social Work contribute 9.7% (35 respondents) and 8.4% (30 respondents), respectively. Sociology and Geography are less represented, constituting 6.1% (22 respondents) and 5.3% (19 respondents), respectively. Analyzing the distribution of respondents across departments can provide valuable insights into the academic and professional backgrounds of the sample.

Relationship between Gender and Political Participation among University of Lagos Students

Did you participate in the Faculty of Social Sciences 2023 student election?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	126	35.1	35.1	35.1
	Yes	233	64.9	64.9	100.0
	Total	359	100.0	100.0	

A notable proportion of students (35.1%) reported that they did not participate in the student election. While the majority of students (64.9%) indicated that they actively participated

in the student election. The level of student participation in the student election carries significant implications for both the student body and the democratic process within the faculty.

If yes, in what capacity did you participate? (Select all that apply)					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Campaigner	4	1.1	1.1	1.1

Valid	Candidate	3	.8	.8	1.9
	Candidate, Voter	7	1.9	1.9	3.9
	Candidate, Voter, Campaigner	4	1.1	1.1	5.0
	None of the above	119	33.1	33.1	38.2
	Voter	181	50.4	50.4	88.6
	Voter, Campaigner	41	11.4	11.4	100.0
	Total	359	100.0	100.0	

A small fraction (1.1%) of students reported participating as campaigners during political activities. These individuals actively promote and advocate for a particular candidate or cause, demonstrating a high level of dedication to the political process. A mere 0.8% of students indicated their involvement as candidates, signifying their willingness to run for positions in student government or other elected roles. A slightly larger percentage (1.9%) mentioned being both candidates and voters, showcasing a multi-faceted approach to political engagement. A select few (1.1%) took on multiple roles as candidates, voters, and campaigners, showcasing a deep commitment to

political causes. Surprisingly, 33.1% of students reported not participating in any of the mentioned capacities during political activities. This suggests a significant portion of students may be disengaged or not actively interested in politics. The majority (50.4%) of students participated solely as voters, exercising their right to cast ballots in various elections. Another noteworthy percentage (11.4%) reported being both voters and campaigners, displaying a balance between participation and advocacy. The level of participation in political activities among university students has several implications for both the student body and the broader democratic society.

Questions		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
There is gender disparity in political participation among University of Lagos students?	Count	18	52	85	139	65	359
	%	5.0%	14.5%	23.7%	38.7%	18.1%	100.0%
Male student participates more than Female student in student politics in SOSSA 2023 Election?	Count	3	32	63	167	94	359
	%	.8%	8.9%	17.5%	46.5%	26.2%	100.0%

Female student participates more than male student in student politics in SOSSA 2023 Election?	Count	22	188	119	20	10	359
	%	6.1%	52.4%	33.1%	5.6%	2.8%	100.0%
We have more female contestant than male contestant in SOSSA 2023 election	Count	43	132	120	41	23	359
	%	12.0%	36.8%	33.4%	11.4%	6.4%	100.0%
We have more male contestant than female contestant in SOSSA 2023 election	Count	7	20	95	142	95	359
	%	1.9%	5.6%	26.5%	39.6%	26.5%	100%

The data indicates that out of the 359 respondents, 139 (38.7%) agree that there is gender disparity in political participation among University of Lagos students, while 85 (23.7%) are neutral, and 70 respondents (19.5%) disagree. 52 (14.5%) respondents strongly disagree, and only 18 (5.0%) strongly agree. These findings suggest that a significant proportion of respondents perceive gender disparity in political participation at the University of Lagos.

Among the respondents, 167 (46.5%) agree that male students participate more in student politics, while 94 (26.2%) strongly agree. In contrast, 63 (17.5%) are neutral on this matter, and 32 (8.9%) disagree. Only 3 (0.8%) respondents strongly disagree. These results indicate that a majority of respondents believe that male students are more active in student politics compared to their female counterparts during the SOSSA 2023 Election.

According to the data, 95 (26.5%) respondents are neutral about the

On this aspect, the data shows that 188 (52.4%) respondents agree that female students participate more in student politics, and 22 (6.1%) strongly agree. In contrast, 119 (33.1%) respondents are neutral, 20 (5.6%) disagree, and 10 (2.8%) strongly disagree. These findings suggest that a significant proportion of respondents perceive female students to be more involved in student politics during the SOSSA 2023 Election.

According to the data, 120 (33.4%) respondents are neutral about the representation of female and male contestants in the SOSSA 2023 Election. 132 (36.8%) respondents disagree that there were more female contestants, while 43 (12.0%) strongly disagree. On the other hand, 41 (11.4%) respondents agree, and 23 (6.4%) strongly agree that there were more female contestants. These results indicate that respondents' perceptions are divided concerning the gender representation of contestants in the election.

representation of male and female contestants in the SOSSA 2023

Election. 20 (5.6%) respondents disagree that there were more male contestants, while 7 (1.9%) strongly disagree. On the other hand, 142

(39.6%) respondents agree, and 95(26.5%) strongly agree that there were more male contestants.

Factors That Contribute to Gender Differences in Political Participation in the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lagos

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Traditional norm and belief (Societal norms of male being the leader)	Count	10	23	87	173	66	359
	%	2.8%	6.4%	24.2%	48.2%	18.4%	100.0%
Discrimination or bias towards female students	Count	11	72	89	131	56	359
	%	3.1%	20.1%	24.8%	36.5%	15.6%	100.0%
Lack of disunity among female representation in leadership positions and in student politics	Count	7	74	97	122	59	359
	%	1.9%	20.6%	27.0%	34.0%	16.4%	100.0%
SOSSA politics atmosphere favors Male candidates than female candidate	Count	15	41	104	130	69	359
	%	4.2%	11.4%	29.0%	36.2%	19.2%	100.0%
SOSSA politics atmosphere favour female candidates than male candidate	Count	27	139	132	50	11	359
	%	7.5%	38.7%	36.8%	13.9%	3.1%	100.0%
African being a patriarchal society reflect on SOSSA politics	Count	8	30	114	136	71	359
	%	2.2%	8.4%	31.8%	37.9%	19.8%	100.0%

Among the respondents, 173 (48.2%) agree that traditional norms and beliefs, specifically the societal norms of males being the leaders, contribute to gender differences in political participation. 87 (24.2%) are neutral on this factor, while 66 (18.4%) strongly agree. On the other

hand, 23 (6.4%) respondents disagree, and 10 (2.8%) strongly disagree. These findings suggest that a significant proportion of respondents believe that traditional gender norms impact political participation dynamics within the Faculty of Social Sciences.

According to the data, 131 (36.5%) respondents agree that discrimination or bias towards female students contributes to gender differences in political participation. 89 (24.8%) are neutral on this factor, while 56 (15.6%) strongly agree. However, 72 (20.1%) respondents disagree, and 11 (3.1%) strongly disagree. These results indicate that a substantial portion of respondents perceive discrimination or bias as a contributing factor to gender differences in political participation.

Among the respondents, 122 (34.0%) agree that a lack of unity among female representation in leadership positions and student politics contributes to gender differences in political participation. 97 (27.0%) are neutral on this factor, while 59 (16.4%) strongly agree. However, 74 (20.6%) respondents disagree, and 7 (1.9%) strongly disagree. These findings suggest that some respondents believe that a lack of unity among female representatives affects their political participation.

According to the data, 130 (36.2%) respondents agree that the SOSSA politics atmosphere favors male candidates more than female candidates in contributing to gender differences in political participation. 104 (29.0%) are neutral on this factor, while 69 (19.2%) strongly agree. However, 41 (11.4%) respondents disagree, and 15 (4.2%) strongly disagree. These results indicate that some respondents perceive a bias in favor of male candidates in the political atmosphere within the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Among the respondents, 139 (38.7%) agree that the SOSSA politics atmosphere favors female candidates

more than male candidates in contributing to gender differences in political participation. 132 (36.8%) are neutral on this factor, while 11 (3.1%) strongly agree. However, 50 (13.9%) respondents disagree, and 27 (7.5%) strongly disagree. These findings suggest that some respondents perceive a bias in favor of female candidates in the political atmosphere within the Faculty of Social Sciences.

According to the data, 136 (37.9%) respondents agree that African being a patriarchal society reflects on SOSSA politics and contributes to gender differences in political participation. 114 (31.8%) are neutral on this factor, while 71 (19.8%) strongly agree. However, 30 (8.4%) respondents disagree, and 8 (2.2%) strongly disagree. These results indicate that some respondents believe that patriarchal societal norms influence the political landscape within the Faculty of Social Sciences.

The analysis of the data reveals varying perceptions among the respondents regarding the factors contributing to gender differences in political participation within the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lagos. Traditional norms and beliefs, discrimination or bias towards female students, and the lack of unity among female representation are some of the factors perceived to influence political participation. Additionally, respondents perceive biases in favor of both male and female candidates in the SOSSA political atmosphere. Moreover, some respondents believe that patriarchal societal norms may impact the political environment within the faculty. These findings underscore the importance of addressing these factors to promote

gender equality and inclusivity in political participation within the academic setting.

Strategies to Increase the Level of Political Participation of Female Students in the University of Lagos.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Leadership training and mentorship programs for female students	Count	4	0	65	180	110	359
	%	1.1%	0.0%	18.1%	50.1%	30.6%	100.0%
Creating a safe and inclusive political environment	Count	3	6	44	166	140	359
	%	.8%	1.7%	12.3%	46.2%	39.0%	100.0%
Increasing awareness about the importance of female political participation	Count	4	4	40	180	131	359
	%	1.1%	1.1%	11.1%	50.1%	36.5%	100.0%
Encouraging female representation in student government and organizations	Count	0	7	46	177	129	359
	%	0.0%	1.9%	12.8%	49.3%	35.9%	100.0%
Creating a female in politics student group and association	Count	0	8	61	182	108	359
	%	0.0%	2.2%	17.0%	50.7%	30.1%	100.0%
Male students should encourage their female colleagues to actively participate	Count	0	10	35	179	135	359
	%	0.0%	2.8%	9.7%	49.9%	37.6%	100.0%

Among the respondents, 180 (50.1%) strongly agree that implementing leadership training and mentorship programs for female students is an effective strategy to increase their level of political participation. Additionally, 65 (18.1%) respondents are neutral, while only 4 (1.1%) disagree and none

strongly disagree. These findings indicate strong support for this strategy, suggesting that providing leadership training and mentorship can empower female students to engage more actively in politics.

A significant proportion of respondents, 166 (46.2%), agree that creating a safe and inclusive political environment can enhance female students' political participation. 44 (12.3%) respondents are neutral, while 9 (2.5%) disagree, and 3 (0.8%) strongly disagree. The high percentage of agreement suggests that promoting a safe and inclusive space for female students can foster their involvement in political activities.

According to the data, 180 (50.1%) respondents agree that increasing awareness about the importance of female political participation can be an effective strategy. 40 (11.1%) respondents are neutral, while 8 (2.2%) disagree, and 4 (1.1%) strongly disagree. These results indicate that raising awareness about the significance of female political participation can positively impact their involvement in political activities.

Among the respondents, 177 (49.3%) agree that encouraging female representation in student government and organizations is a viable strategy. 46 (12.8%) respondents are neutral, while 7

(1.9%) disagree, and none strongly disagree. These findings suggest that actively promoting female representation in leadership roles can motivate female students to participate more in political activities.

The data indicates that 182 (50.7%) respondents agree with the idea of creating a female in politics student group and association. 61 (17.0%) respondents are neutral, while 8 (2.2%) disagree, and none strongly disagree. These results suggest that establishing a dedicated group for female students interested in politics can foster a supportive community and encourage their political engagement.

Among the respondents, 179 (49.9%) agree that male students should encourage their female colleagues to actively participate in politics. 35 (9.7%) respondents are neutral, while 10 (2.8%) disagree, and none strongly disagree. These findings imply that male students can play a significant role in promoting female political participation through support and encouragement.

4.4 TEST FOR VALIDITY

SURVEY THEME	Cronbach Alpha	No of Item
Relationship between Gender and Political Participation among University Students	.864	6
Factors That Contribute to Gender Differences in Political Participation in the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lagos	.765	6
Strategies to Increase the Level of Political Participation of Female Students in the University of Lagos	.899	6

Source: SPSS computation of survey gathered

The questionnaire's internal consistency is assessed through the Cronbach's alpha statistics table, which reveals the coherence of the topics examined. The first theme, "Relationship between Gender and Political Participation among University of Lagos Students," comprising six items, demonstrates a Cronbach alpha of 0.864, indicating a satisfactory level of internal consistency among the items and ensuring the gathered data's appropriateness for the study. Similarly, the second theme, "Factors That Contribute to Gender Differences in Political Participation in the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lagos," attains a Cronbach alpha score of 0.765, signifying strong internal consistency in the data collected and suitability for generating research findings. Lastly, the third theme,

"Strategies to Increase the Level of Political Participation of Female Students in the University of Lagos," exhibits the highest Cronbach alpha of 0.899, further confirming substantial internal consistency and validating the research's results for drawing conclusions.

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

H0: There is no significant relationship between Gender and Participation among University of Lagos Student.

H1: There is a significant relationship between Gender and Participation among University of Lagos Student.

Correlations			
		Gender	Political participation of Unilag of Lagos students
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	.662**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.028
	N	359	359
Political participation of Unilag students	Pearson Correlation	.662**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.028	
	N	359	359

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed)

The first hypothesis is also analyzed using the Pearson correlation test. The test is conducted at a significance level of 0.05. This implies that the test is at a confidence level of 0.95, amounting to 95% accuracy. The table above shows that the relationship between the variables (gender and political participation of Unilag students) is ($r = 0.662$, $p < 0.05$). The variables are strongly positively correlated. This implies that a positive change in the dependent variable will lead to a positive change in the dependent variable and vice versa. Following the strongly correlated variables, the null hypothesis "There is no significant relationship between Gender and Participation among University of Lagos Student" will be rejected and the alternate hypothesis "There is a significant relationship between Gender and Participation among University of Lagos Student" will be accepted.

CONCLUSION

The research findings provide important insights into the relationship between gender and political participation among University of Lagos students using SOSSA 2023 election. The study has shed light on the challenges faced by female students in engaging with the political process and the role of societal norms and political culture in shaping gendered political behavior. Gender inequality stands tall amongst hindering democratic development in developing countries like Nigeria. Just like in every democratic society, political participation is the core strength of the system and makes sure the government is answerable to the people. The gender disparity in political participation is a matter of concern as it hinders the full

representation and participation of female students in the university's political life. It is essential to address these disparities to create a more inclusive and equitable democratic environment on campus. Due to this, the study recommended the following.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed to address the gender disparity in political participation among University of Lagos students and to increase female student political participation, strategies like the following have to be examined:

1. Leadership Training and Mentorship Programs for Female Students:

In order to increase female student participation in student politics as well as their future political activity, the university and other interested organization should foster participation female by student by creating leadership and mentorship program and civic education of females in schools and universities is crucial. Therefore, institutionalizing young people's civic education and involvement in contexts they frequently encounter is essential to their future political participation. Additionally, it gives them the knowledge on why they should participate in the political process of their department and faculty. This training is not limited to the university only as numerous NGOs have saddled themselves with this task.

2. Creating a Safe and Inclusive Political Environment

According to this study, it showed that female students are subjected to gender inequality and discrimination therefore, governments and the university should establish gender-responsive policies and practices against any trace of discrimination and bias against female student. A safe and inclusive political climate where everyone may take part and lead without fear of discrimination or harassment is necessary for the greater political participation of female student in politics.

3. Creating a Female in Politics Student Group and Association

In the course of this study, it has been reviewed that one on the factor contributing to gender disparity in the university system is lack of unity among female student in politics, there is not just discrimination against women in politics, but often women themselves stand as a constraint to each other as they tend to treat the few ones in politics with disdain out of hatred and competition. Therefore, it is expedient that female' student should support females who are qualified to run and even encourage each other to participate in the political process and one way of doing this is to create a female in politics student group and association where they unite encourage each other in any way they can.

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