



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### EFFECT OF CHANNELS TELEVISION'S YOUTUBE UPLOADS ON THE POLITICAL INTEREST OF YOUTHS IN NIGERIA

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#### ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to examine youths' interest in traditional political activities and online political activities before and after exposure to *Politics Today* program intervention on YouTube. The quasi-experimental pretest-posttest non-equivalent control group design using questionnaires was utilized in studying sixty (60) participants who were chosen through the purposive sampling technique from the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The study showed that *Politics Today* program on Channels' Television's YouTube page had no effect on youths' interest to participate in active politics. The study recommends that there should be proper orientation in educational institutions and to the youths in the country generally in order to stimulate their interest in political activities as their contribution is also needed to accelerate development.

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## INTRODUCTION

The participation of citizens in the political processes of a country is considered to be of extreme importance especially in democratic settings. The democratic system of governance is widely seen as a form of government of the people, by the people and for the people, and its true nature, meaning and relevance is brought to the fore when the people in their numbers are involved in its processes. Democracy and politics are no strange bedfellows. In the most part, one can hardly function without the other. While politics is the vehicle that drives democracy, political activities and processes are to be carried out following certain democratic principles in order to be seen as credible. An aspect of politics that is of interest to most democratic systems across the world is youth participation in politics. Most countries today advocate for youth participation in politics to ensure continuity, positive social change and development. In Nigeria, interest in political participation is weak among the youths when compared to what obtains in more developed countries. It is rather worrying to note that a large number of individuals found around the corridors of power today are either those who have been there since the country's independence in 1960 or their acquaintances. Sadly, development cannot be achieved through a unidirectional passing of information or by having the same set of individuals remain in power even when it is clear that they have nothing more to offer.

For development to thrive, all concerned, including future generations, must join hands and get actively involved to bring about desired changes. All developed countries across the world have robust roadmaps for integrating their youths and future generations into politics, governance and economic developmental activities. This is because the youths are considered very active and can go the extra mile in bringing about new approaches and discoveries that has the capacity to move the society beyond its current level. Therefore, through the conceptualization and infusion of strategies that are youth oriented into politics, governance, entrepreneurship, and other economic developmental activities, they are attracted into various segments of the society where in they can learn and develop skills that can enable them contribute meaningfully and be relevant in the society. In recent times, conceptualizing and infusing youth oriented approaches into societal activities has been enhanced with the advent of the Internet and its complimentary social networking platforms that has gained widespread acceptance among the younger generation. Therefore, to gain their attention, leaders of thoughts in various segments of respective societies have sometimes resorted to the use of social media platforms to disseminate relevant information about specific areas. Before now, traditional media – radio, television and newspapers have served as viable means through which different sections of the society are reached with relevant information. Though with several barriers, the print and broadcast media had to design and create appropriate

programmes and columns to publish or broadcast important messages targeted at specific audiences. However, the entrance of internet networking platforms popularly known as social media altered in many ways, what was formerly a traditional method of information sharing. Today, these media outfits are increasing their presence on social media in order to maintain a grip on their audience most especially the youth, that are believed to constitute a larger proportion of social media audience, thereby confirming the effectiveness of online media platforms in reaching the youth. Perhaps, it is the prospect of online media platforms as an effective tool in getting the attention of youths that inspired previously traditional television based programs to make a paradigm shift by creating and using online platforms to further promote the dissemination of politics and other news stories so as to be within the space of youth interest.

The media generally are vested with various functions such as educating, informing, instructing, inspiring and persuading the populace to participate in activities that are of national concern. Jerry (1993) posited that newspapers have been used as a major source of political and historical information long before the advent of radio and television. At their emergence, both radio and television served as complementary platforms through which the important functions of the media were further carried out. Sobowale (2010) cited a 2003 study which found that the audience has shifted to using radio and television as their primary sources for political information in Lagos, Nigeria. Emruli and Baca (2011) credited this development to the advancement in technology by stating that as technology develops, the dissemination of political information will be done in different ways which will stimulate the interest and aid political participation among the new generation. In Nigeria, youth interest and participation in political processes have been on the decline since the attainment of independence. Omede and Ojibara (2017) attributed this development in part, to the incessant military incursion into politics in Nigeria which has affected the political culture and political socialization process of the Nigerian people, to which the return of democracy in 1999 has not been able to remedy. Most Nigerians especially the youth believe that the political terrain in Nigeria is not conducive for citizens' participation. Hence, politics is left for those they consider rigid enough to withstand the prevailing political environment which is characterized by electoral violence, political assassinations, god fatherism, corruption and rigging among others. However, participating in a nation's political process is the responsibility of every citizen and cannot be left in the hands of a few privileged individuals. The younger generation in particular is expected to show keen interest in the political processes of the nation as they represent its future.

Participation in politics by the youths is therefore a necessity in improving the wellbeing and development of the nation. Based on their prolific use of the internet and access to vital global information, youth are abreast of situations and challenges bedeviling the society and are able to take cues available from their information sources to develop themselves on critical areas that would enable them make meaningful contributions to advance the country. According to McManimon (2015), political participation includes activities such as being active members of political parties, interaction with politicians, participating in campaigns, voting and signing online petitions. Contesting for political positions in the country is also a political activity an individual can engage in. These forms of

political participation are important foundations for a meaningful and successful democracy. Omede and Ojibara (2017) stated that the failure of the political class to address numerous challenges facing the country such as illiteracy, youth under/unemployment and the absence of basic social and infrastructural amenities have contributed to the decline in popular support and interest in politics and democracy among the youth. Election rigging, increase in political corruption and general disaffection about the Nigeria state are the common excuses for political alienation among Nigerians particularly the youth, majority of whom would prefer leaving the country at the slightest opportunity. To them, politics and democratic rule is yet to provide social welfares, economic development and the guarantee of fundamental human rights as the case is in other countries. This leaves them with little or no interest to participate in any form of civil engagement. In addition, the process of political recruitment in all political parties in Nigeria is also questionable due in part, to the questionable means by which party funds are sourced.

Political parties in Nigeria are financed by the powerful political elites who dictate who gets what, when and how. This is in sharp contrast with what obtains in most developed democracies where parties are been financed by dues paid by all members on a regular basis. The fact that every member contributes to the development of the party in some way, creates a level playing ground and an equal opportunity for all. Evidently, this has led to the emergence of young minds such as Sebastain Kurz who became the President of Austria at age 31, President Enrico Carattoni of San Marino at age 32, Kim Jon Un of North Korea at 34 years, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani who became president of Qatar at 37 years, Jacinda Ardern of New Zealand at 37 years, Leo Varadkar of Ireland at 38 years, Juri Ratas of Estonia at 39 years, and Emmanuel Macron of France at 39 years (Corcoran, 2017). Although, all political parties in Nigeria have a youth wing, in most cases the youth leaders are people older than the age bracket used in defining a youth in the country's constitution. This disinterest in politics and democracy among the youths of Nigeria occasioned by the aforementioned factors makes them an important constituency for electoral mobilization. The media, as a leading agent of social mobilization on issues of national importance are therefore expected to lead out in informing, educating and mobilizing the youth of the country to have a re-think about their interest in the politics of a country yearning for the contribution of all and sundry. In recent times, the use of social media for political mobilization and participation has been on the rise. It is on record that former US president Barrack Obama was said to have overwhelmingly won the 2008 US presidential election with the support of his positive reviews on social media. In Nigeria also, Bimber, (2014) asserted that the use of social media for political participation and mobilization during the 2011 general election that brought former president Goodluck Jonathan to power contributed to making that election one of the best to go down in the history of the country. Madueke, Nwosu, Ogbonnaya and Anumadu (2017) opined that the consequence of this strategy was the active involvement of youths in political discourse, expression of youth opinions, interaction with politicians and engagement in the political processes that characterized the build up to those elections as occasioned by the use of social media platforms. With the number of internet users in Nigeria rising on daily bases – currently 84.3 million (Statista, 2018), the online space is fast becoming a viable tool for stimulating political interest amongst the youths since they are avid users

of the internet. Traditional media outlets in Nigeria have therefore sought to capitalize on the prospects of online media in promoting political contents in order to encourage youth participation in politics. Such effort is seen in what Channels Television; a leading broadcast station based in Lagos, Nigeria has done, by including the use of social media as one of its strategy to reach a wider audience, especially the youth through the introduction of real time live streaming of a number of programmes since 2006 through its website [www.channelstv.com](http://www.channelstv.com). Since then, the station has garnered for itself a Twitter followership of 3.2 million, 1.3 million on Facebook, and 341,000 on Instagram. In 2018, Social Bakers, a global social media analytics company ranked Channels Television as the leading TV station on YouTube with a total of 200,099, 847 uploaded video views in Nigeria. The television station's flagship political programme *Politics Today*, has been a weekly show that brings to the fore various developments in political activities and national issues. The program is broadcast live on television as well as on YouTube. Previous episodes can be searched and viewed as many times as possible on the verified Channels Television YouTube channel. Hall (2009) credited Steve Grove, the News and Political Director of YouTube, with the assertion that the platform has the ability to become the new democratic space for engagement. This seems to agree with Marshall McLuhan's quote - "we shape our tools and thereafter the tools shaped us". This paradigm shift in the communication industry as championed by Channels Television in Nigeria thus forms the foundation for this study as it tries to establish the effect of Channels Television's YouTube uploads on political interest among Nigerian youths.

The state of interest to participate in politics in Nigeria among the country's youth is on a decline while political apathy increases steadily. In May 2017, Sahara Reporters gathered that out of 60% of youths who are eligible to vote in Nigeria, only a mere 5% actively do so. This may not be unconnected with the high scale corruption, election rigging, political assassinations, electoral violence and dictatorship in political parties by elites who sponsor candidates that have characterized Nigeria's political environment for a long time. Youths in Nigeria are said to account for about 65% of the total population of the nation (Amadi, 2012). It should therefore not be a coincidence to think that they have a stake in the political arena and can contribute meaningfully to the development of the nation. Should the apathetic attitude by the youth towards politics be allowed to continue, the country will never benefit from their input and thus may continue to lag behind among developed and developing countries. Also, as Idike (2014) suggests, it could result in the government becoming a "mindless machine" that decreases people's involvement in politics and consequently causing democracy not to be of, by and for the people. The media which is the fourth estate of the realm is responsible for igniting interest, increasing knowledge, shaping perceptions of the political system in the country and holding the government accountable to all citizens, the youth inclusive. If there is a high level of political apathy among any section of the country's citizenry, it is then necessary to check the efforts of media houses especially now that democracy appear to have stabilized in the nation and needing the commitment and contribution of all and sundry. Shamsu, Bahtiar and Suhaini (2016) suggested that the traditional forms of political participation amongst the youth in developed and developing countries are on a decline and are no longer riveted to the traditional media which includes radio,

newspapers and television. This may not be unconnected to the observation of Dhaha and Igale, (2013), where they noted that the traditional media have not been successful in encouraging youths to participate in politics. The mainstream media in many developing countries, Nigeria inclusive, appear to have aligned themselves with the government even in situations where their activities do not favour the populace. Rather than holding them accountable to the people, they sing their praises unreservedly while ignoring the people's plight. This has resulted to a loss of public confidence on the mainstream media and caused the youth in particular to turn to social media in search of satisfaction to their craving for media content. Studies has been done on the utilization of the online video platforms by political candidates to drive political participation among the youths, the extent to which youths use social media for political activities, youths perception of political activities, the effect of social interaction and so on. However, research has not focused on the utilization of social media by traditional media houses in driving interest to participate in politics among youths. Channels Television is one of the many traditional media houses that are utilizing the social media for the dissemination of political content, stimulating political interest and driving political participation. The effectiveness of this tactic is yet to be ascertained and therefore underlines the fulcrum for this study, which sought to investigate Channels Television YouTube uploads effect on the political interest of Nigerian youths. The study was anchored on the Uses and Gratification theory which rests on the basic assumption that people actively use the media to satisfy their needs and was guided by the following hypotheses:

**H<sub>1</sub>**. There is a significant difference in participant's level of interest in traditional political activities before and after *Politics Today* program intervention on YouTube.

**H<sub>2</sub>**. There is a significant difference in participant's level of interest in online political participation before and after the *Politics Today* program intervention on YouTube.

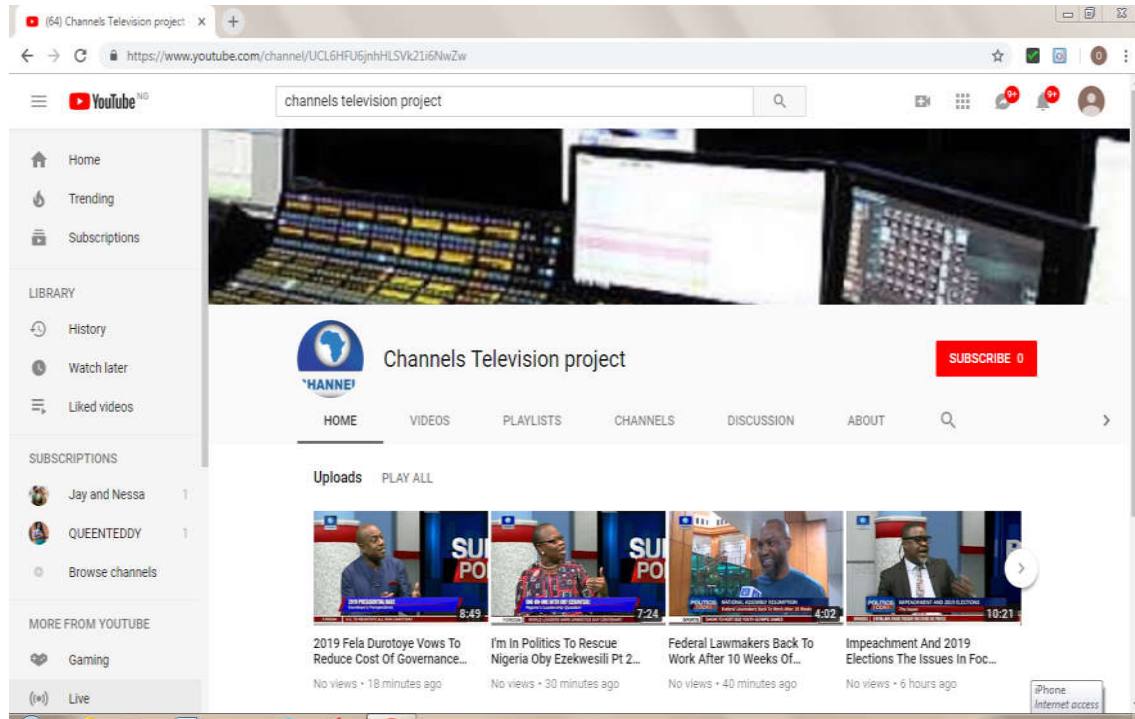
## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study utilized the quasi-experimental pretest-posttest non-equivalent control group design using questionnaire. This design is used when the researcher is interested in comparing the effect an intervention will have on an experimental and control group. Wimmer and Dominick (2011) stated that this research design is used to establish a cause and effect relationship. The design made use of an experimental group and a control group. Here, the intervention was exposed only to the experimental group while the controlled group was excluded. A pretest and posttest was conducted and the difference between both groups was used to ascertain the effect of the intervention. In this quasi-experimental design, the subjects were not randomly selected. The 60 participants studied were drawn from the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria (ten from each zone). The experimental group was exposed to Channel's Television's program, *Politics Today* on a dummy Channels Television YouTube account (Figs 1 and 2), being the intervention chosen for the study while at the same time alienating the control group. A structured questionnaire was used to carry out a pretest and posttest on participants to see if intervention had any effect. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Hypothesis was tested using paired samples T-test to determine significant

difference in all group’s interest in traditional political activities and online political participation before and after intervention. Figure 3 indicates that permanent voter cards were not widely available among subjects. Hence, majority of participants were not eligible voters as only 33 percent had PVCs despite that all participants were above the stipulated minimum age limit for voting in Nigeria, which is 18 years.

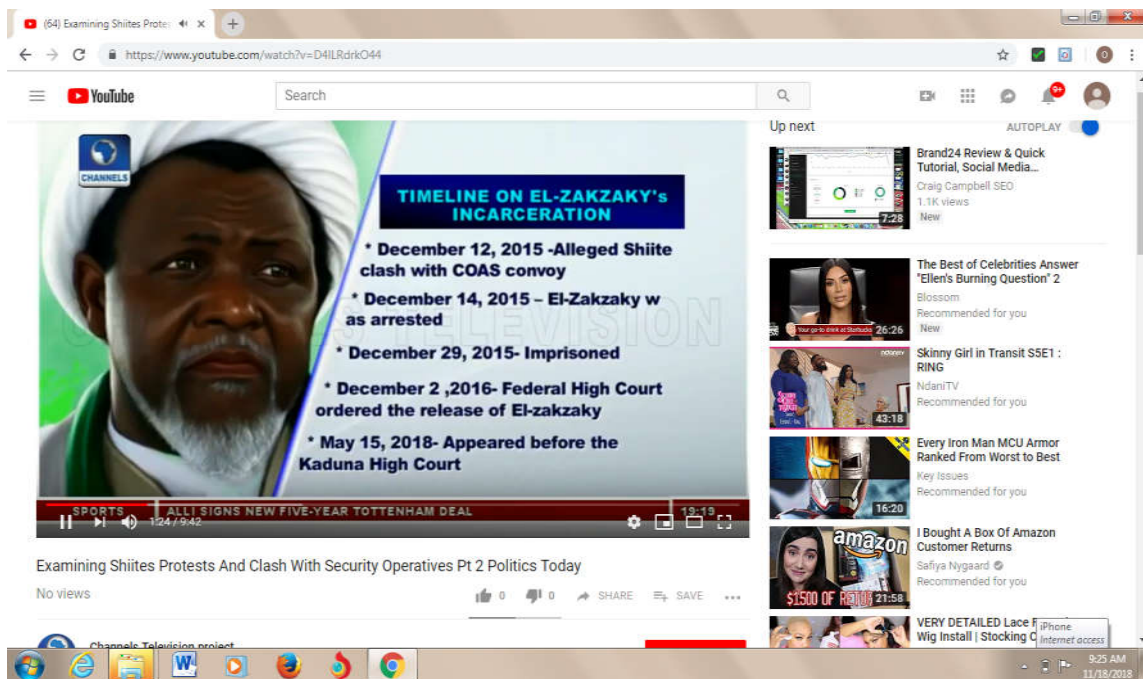
**Test of Hypotheses**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant difference in participant’s level of interest in participating in traditional political activities before and after the *Politics Today* program intervention on YouTube. Table 4b indicate that there was no significant difference in participant’s level of interest in participating in traditional



Source: YouTube

**Figure 1. Index page of dummy Channels Television YouTube Page designed to expose the intervention for the study**



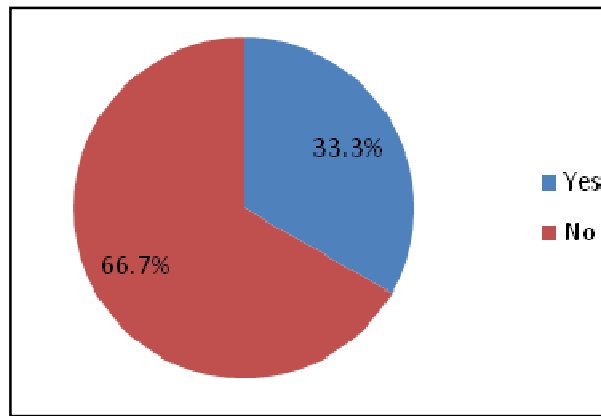
Source: YouTube

**Figure 2. Index page of dummy Channels Television YouTube Page showing a *Politics Today* program intervention**

**Table 1. Summary of quasi-experimental pretest-posttest nonequivalent control group research design for this study**

Groups	Assessment		Post Test (End of 4 weeks)
	Pre-test	Intervention	
Experimental Group	✓	<i>Politics Today</i> program on Channels Television’s YouTube channel	✓
Control Group	✓	0	✓

## Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings



**Fig. 3. Participants who had Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs)**

**Table 2. Level of Interest in Participating in Traditional Political Activities**

Items	Groups	Test	$\bar{x}$	SD
I will like to engage in voting activities whenever election periods come up in Nigeria	Experimental	Pre	3.13	1.48
		Post	3.57	0.94
	Control	Pre	3.77	1.04
		Post	3.63	0.89
Persuading citizens to vote is something I will do to encourage political participation	Experimental	Pre	3.70	1.21
		Post	3.83	0.91
	Control	Pre	3.67	1.18
		Post	3.37	1.07
I will like to work with electoral officers to ensure smooth running of the voting processes in the country	Experimental	Pre	3.23	1.45
		Post	3.37	1.13
	Control	Pre	3.40	0.89
		Post	3.03	0.76
I can contest for a political position in future	Experimental	Pre	3.40	1.33
		Post	2.80	1.30
	Control	Pre	3.40	1.22
		Post	3.30	1.15
To be a political party member is something I can consider	Experimental	Pre	3.30	1.26
		Post	2.67	1.30
	Control	Pre	3.73	1.05
		Post	3.33	1.18
I can seek information about the electoral processes to guide by voting decisions	Experimental	Pre	3.87	1.36
		Post	3.77	1.22
	Control	Pre	3.97	1.03
		Post	3.77	1.01
Summary of Statistics				
Experimental	Pre		3.44	1.35
	Post		3.33	1.13
Control	Pre		3.66	1.07
	Post		3.41	1.01

**Table 3. Level of Interest in Online Political Participating**

Items	Groups	Test	$\bar{x}$	SD
I can create a blog to enlighten the public about current political activities	Experimental	Pre	3.37	1.27
		Post	3.57	1.14
	Control	Pre	3.40	1.30
		Post	2.37	1.38
Sharing political posts seen on you YouTube is an activity I see myself engaging on	Experimental	Pre	3.20	1.16
		Post	3.50	1.28
	Control	Pre	3.03	1.35
		Post	2.63	1.54
I can visit the social media pages of politicians and governmental bodies to know their current updates	Experimental	Pre	3.87	1.04
		Post	3.73	1.14
	Control	Pre	4.00	1.17
		Post	3.90	1.40
Contributing to political issue via commenting on public posts by traditional media houses is an activity I can engage in	Experimental	Pre	3.30	1.21
		Post	3.53	1.33
	Control	Pre	3.73	1.20
		Post	3.47	1.57
Online campaigns for a positive political cause is of great importance and I will like to join in one	Experimental	Pre	3.37	1.35
		Post	3.83	1.21
	Control	Pre	3.83	1.29
		Post	3.60	1.57
I can participate in a question and answer session organized online by a politician	Experimental	Pre	3.63	1.07
		Post	3.80	1.00
	Control	Pre	3.87	1.28
		Post	3.77	1.48
Sending an email to a governmental body is an activity I can engage in to drive action	Experimental	Pre	3.63	1.19
		Post	3.37	1.40
	Control	Pre	3.67	1.40
		Post	3.30	1.62
Summary of Statistics				
Experimental	Pre		3.48	1.18
	Post		3.62	1.21
Control	Pre		3.65	1.29
	Post		3.29	1.51

**Table 4a. Paired Samples T-Test Statistics of Level of Interest in Participating in Traditional Political Activities before and after *Politics Today* Program YouTube Intervention for Experimental Group**

Variable	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Traditional Pol. Activities Pre	17.4111	30	4.70708	0.85939
Traditional Pol. Activities Post	16.8611	30	3.70205	0.67590

**Table 4b. Paired Samples T-Test Analysis of Level of Interest in Participating in Traditional Political Activities before and after *Politics Today* Program YouTube Intervention for Experimental Group**

	Paired Differences				T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
Traditional Pol. Activities Pre Traditional Pol. Activities Post	0.55000	5.85115	1.06827	Lower -1.63485 Upper 2.73485	0.515	29	0.611

**Table 4c. Paired Samples T-Test Statistics of Level of Interest in Participating in Traditional Political Activities before and after *Politics Today* Program YouTube Intervention for Control Group**

Variable	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Traditional Pol. Activities Pre	18.6278	30	4.22968	0.77223
Traditional Pol. Activities Post	17.2944	30	4.50302	0.82213

**Table 4d. Paired Samples T-Test Analysis of Level of Interest in Participating in Traditional Political Activities before and after *Politics Today* Program YouTube Intervention for Control Group**

	Paired Differences				T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
Traditional Pol. Activities Pre Traditional Pol. Activities Post	1.33333	5.49852	1.00389	Lower -0.71985 Upper 3.38651	1.328	29	0.194

**Table 5a. Paired Samples T-Test Statistics of Level of Interest in Online Political Participation before and after *Politics Today* Program YouTube Intervention for Experimental Group**

Variable	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Online Pol. Part. Pre	21.2524	30	4.76081	0.86920
Online Pol. Part. Post	22.4476	30	5.08627	0.92862

**Table 5b. Paired Samples T-Test Analysis of Level of Interest in Online Political Participation before and after *Politics Today* Program YouTube Intervention for Experimental Group**

	Paired Differences				T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
Online Pol. Part. Pre Online Pol. Part. Post	-1.19524	7.39253	1.34969	Lower -3.95565 Upper 1.56518	-0.886	29	0.383

political activities before and after the *Politics Today* program intervention on YouTube ( $t(29) = 0.515$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). This suggests that *Politics Today* program intervention on YouTube did not improve participants' interest in participating in traditional political activities; hence, their level of interest was similar. Consequently, the hypothesis was rejected. Table 4d shows that there was no significant difference in participant's level of interest in participating in traditional political activities before and after for the control group ( $t(29) = 1.328$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). This suggests that participants' interest in participating in traditional political activities was similar at pre and post-intervention.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** There is a significant difference in participant's level of interest in online political participation before and after the *Politics Today* program intervention on YouTube.

Table 5a indicate there was no significant difference in participant's level of interest in online political participation before and after the *Politics Today* program intervention on

YouTube ( $t(29) = -0.886$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). This suggests that *Politics Today* program intervention on YouTube did not improve participant's level of interest in online political participation; hence, their level of interest was similar. Consequently, the hypothesis was rejected. It could be seen from Table 5c that there was no significant difference in participant's level of interest in online political participation ( $t(29) = 1.211$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). This suggests that participants' online political participation was similar at pre and post-intervention.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings revealed that *Politics Today* program which is uploaded on the Channel's Television YouTube page is ineffective in raising the level of interest of Nigerian youths in participating in traditional political activities. The intervention was found to have no effect on their interest to participate in traditional political as Table 4 shows that the experimental

**Table 5b. Paired Samples T-Test Statistics of Level of Interest in Online Political Participation before and after *Politics Today* Program YouTube Intervention for Control Group**

Variable	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Online Pol. Part. Pre	22.3905	30	6.21840	1.13532
Online Pol. Part. Post	20.2048	30	7.45983	1.36197

**Table 5c: Paired Samples T-Test Analysis of Level of Interest in Online Political Participation before and after *Politics Today* Program YouTube Intervention for Control Group**

	Paired Differences				T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
Online Pol. Part. Pre Online Pol. Part. Post	2.18571	9.88941	1.80555	Lower -1.50705 Upper 5.87848	1.211	29	0.236

group at pre ( $\bar{x} = 3.44$ ) and post-intervention ( $\bar{x} = 3.33$ ) had low level of interest in participating in traditional political activities before and after *Politics Today* program intervention on YouTube. This implies that the *Politics Today* program intervention was ineffective. After the intervention, participants had high level of interest to participate in voting activities whenever election periods come up in Nigeria ( $\bar{x} = 3.57$ ) and the reason could be that they were exposed to political content that were showing voting processes as at the time of 2019 election in the Nigeria. The test of hypothesis (Table 4b), revealed that the intervention's effect was not significant. There was no significant difference in the study subject's interest to participate in traditional political activities before and after *Politics Today* program intervention on YouTube. This result is in affirmation to what Shamsu, Bahtier and Suhaini (2016) asserted about youth's interest in participating in the traditional forms of political participation. In their opinion, youths would rather have interest in other forms of political participation than traditional politics. Despite that participants were exposed to political video contents during the 2019 general elections in Nigerian, but there was no interest to participate in the political activities of the nation. This lack of interest may be the reason why 66.7% of the participants who had reached the legible age for voting (18 and above) had no voter cards, and this is in line with Sahara reporters claim in 2016 that out of 60% of the youths that are eligible to vote, only a mere 5% actively do so. The participation of youths in the traditional political activities of a country is a strong determinant of the development of the country. McClurg (2003) suggested in his study that youths do not participate in traditional political activities because of godfatherism, unemployment and the refusal of older politicians to retire, it may be these same reasons that affect their level of interest to participate in traditional political activities.

Conversely, the study also discovered that *Politics Today* program intervention had an effect in raising participants interest to online political activities as the post-test ( $\bar{x} = 3.62$ ) is higher than the pre-test ( $\bar{x} = 3.48$ ), meaning that their interest went from a low to a high level. The participants had a high level of interest in creating a blog to enlighten the public about political activities ( $\bar{x} = 3.57$ ) at post intervention, sharing political posts seen on YouTube ( $\bar{x} = 3.50$ ). This is in line with what Curry (2012) observed in his study, "You Tube's Potential as a Model for Democracy: Exploring Citizen tube for "Thick" Democratic Content". This study reveals that YouTube has a very strong potential in fostering positive political attitudes, participation and online manifestations as

seen Table 5. After the intervention, participants now had a higher level of interest in online political activities. However, from table 5b, the test of hypothesis showed that there is no significant difference in participant's level of interest in online political participation. In other words, this *Politics Today* program intervention had no effect in improving participants level of interest in online political. Online political participation in the context of this study refers contribution to the political processes and activities online and they could include creating blogs to enlighten people about current political activities, sharing political posts seen on YouTube, visiting the social media pages of politicians and governmental bodies, contributing to political issues via commenting on public posts by traditional media houses, engaging in online campaigns for a positive political cause, participate in a question and answer session organized online by a politician and sending an email to a governmental body. The results corroborates the uses and gratifications theory, although youths are very receptive towards social media, they were very cautious on the kind of effect certain media messages would have on them. The low level of interest in online political participation shows that the social media is not the solution to every problem as regards the youth. In a study by Waller (2013), results showed that although social media can be a viable tool in encouraging political conversations and participation, it cannot eradicate the current state of political apathy in Jamaica. An opposing point of view from the findings of Dangona, Karick and Abubakar (2013) is that youths use the internet to find likeminded people for political discussions and that they do not use the social media platforms for not just entertainment purposes but also for engaging in online political activities. While this was observed to be true to a certain extent during the build up to the 2011 general elections in Nigeria, the same cannot be said of the just concluded 2019 general elections. According to Muntean (2015), the use of social media for news is a predictor of online political participation and the use of social media for news can be useful strategy in encouraging youth's participation in politics. This claim is being negated by this study as the intervention on YouTube did not have an effect on subject's level of interest to participate in politics online.

## Conclusion

This study grew from the decline in political participation amongst the youths in Nigeria. If the youths lack interest in political discourses, their participation in politics may not be guaranteed. Therefore the media must take it as a duty to ignite the interest and increase the knowledge of the youth on



political activities in the country. The state of interest to participate in politics in Nigeria is on the decline especially amongst the youth, hence political apathy on the increase. *Politics Today* program on Channels' Televisions YouTube page has no effect on Nigerian youth's interest to participate in politics. Participant's response after intervention revealed that interest to participate in both traditional and online political activities was low. The youths are active and regular users of social media platforms and if they are not motivated to participate in the politics of the country then there is a gap that has to be filled by media outfits. Having established the ineffectiveness of *Politics Today* programs uploaded on YouTube in raising the interest of youths in participating in politics, traditional media houses should put more effort in strategizing on how best their political programs can stimulate the interest of the younger generation towards politics. The government also has a duty to play in being accountable to the people as this would motivate and ignite the interest of youths to participate in politics.

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