

# Examining The Manifestations of Political Apathy in The Nigerian 2023 General Election

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**Abstract** - This study examines the manifestations of political apathy in Nigeria's 2023 general elections, with specific focus on declining voter turnout and youth participation. Despite increased voter registration and the introduction of electoral reforms and technological innovations aimed at improving transparency, the 2023 elections recorded the lowest turnout since Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999. This trend raises concerns about democratic legitimacy and the sustainability of electoral participation. The study investigates the factors responsible for declining voter turnout and analyzes how youth participation influenced overall electoral engagement. Anchored on Rational Choice Theory and Political Efficacy Theory, the research adopts a descriptive survey design, utilizing primary data collected through structured questionnaires alongside secondary data from official electoral reports and scholarly sources. Findings reveal that lack of trust in the electoral management body, electoral violence, economic hardship, and perceived electoral fraud significantly contributed to voter disengagement. The results further show a substantial gap between youth registration and actual turnout, indicating weakened political efficacy and institutional confidence among younger voters. The study concludes that political apathy in Nigeria reflects structural and institutional challenges rather than mere voter indifference. It recommends strengthening electoral credibility, improving security during elections, enhancing civic education, and addressing socio-economic constraints to restore public trust and deepen democratic participation.

**Index Terms:** Political apathy, Voter turnout, Youth participation, Electoral engagement and Electoral credibility

## I. INTRODUCTION

Political participation remains the cornerstone of democratic governance, with elections serving as the principal mechanism through which citizens exercise sovereignty and confer legitimacy on political authority. In representative democracies, voter turnout is widely regarded as a key indicator of democratic health, institutional trust, and civic

engagement. In Nigeria, since the return to democratic rule in 1999, general elections have been conducted regularly under the supervision of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). However, despite institutional reforms and the introduction of technological innovations such as the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System in 2023, electoral participation has steadily declined. Empirical data show that voter turnout dropped from 54 percent in 2011 to 27 percent in 2023, marking the lowest turnout since the Fourth Republic (INEC, 2023; Alexander & Ogoh, 2023). This persistent decline suggests not merely electoral fatigue but a deeper pattern of political disengagement that threatens democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Political apathy, defined as citizens' indifference or withdrawal from political processes, has increasingly characterized Nigeria's electoral landscape. Scholars argue that apathy manifests in abstention from voting, failure to collect Permanent Voter Cards, and limited engagement in civic discourse (Abdullahi & Arabo, 2023; Yakubu, 2012). While Nigeria has recorded rising numbers of registered voters over successive elections, this has not translated into proportional participation, revealing a widening gap between registration and actual voting. Studies link this pattern to declining trust in electoral institutions, perceived electoral manipulation, electoral violence, and socio-economic hardship (Ogu & Peter, 2023; Andza & Akuva, 2019). The 2023 general elections, despite heightened political awareness and unprecedented youth mobilization prior to the polls, produced historically low turnout figures, reinforcing concerns that skepticism about electoral credibility may be transforming into sustained political withdrawal.

The manifestations of political apathy were particularly visible in demographic participation patterns during the 2023 elections. Although young Nigerians aged 18 to 35 constituted a significant

proportion of registered voters, their turnout rate was considerably lower than that of older citizens, indicating generational disparities in electoral engagement (INEC, 2023; Christian, 2023). This youth disengagement is especially troubling given the demographic structure of Nigeria, where young people represent a large segment of the population and are central to long-term democratic sustainability. Furthermore, regional turnout variations across states such as Nasarawa, the Federal Capital Territory, and Edo highlight localized expressions of apathy shaped by institutional trust, security conditions, and candidate appeal (Alexander & Ogoh, 2023). Taken together, these trends underscore the need to systematically examine the manifestations of political apathy in the 2023 general elections, as understanding its observable patterns is crucial for restoring electoral confidence and strengthening democratic participation in Nigeria.

## II. STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

Despite Nigeria's continuous democratic experience since 1999, voter turnout has steadily declined, reaching its lowest point in the 2023 general elections. Official statistics indicate that turnout fell from 54 percent in 2011 to 27 percent in 2023, even though the number of registered voters increased significantly during the same period (Independent National Electoral Commission [INEC], 2023; Alexander & Ogoh, 2023). This widening gap between voter registration and actual participation raises fundamental concerns about the vitality of Nigeria's democracy. Elections are expected to reflect the will of the people and confer legitimacy on elected leaders; however, persistent low turnout undermines representative governance and weakens public accountability. The 2023 elections, which were characterized by heightened political awareness and technological innovations, paradoxically recorded unprecedented voter disengagement, suggesting that deeper structural and attitudinal challenges persist within the electoral system.

More specifically, the manifestations of political apathy were evident in demographic and regional participation patterns during the 2023 elections. Youths constituted a substantial proportion of registered voters but recorded disproportionately low turnout compared to older age groups, indicating generational disengagement from formal political processes (Christian, 2023; INEC, 2023).

Additionally, regional turnout variations across states such as Nasarawa, the Federal Capital Territory, and Edo State further reveal uneven electoral engagement and localized expressions of apathy. Although previous studies have examined causes of low participation in earlier elections, there remains limited focused empirical analysis on how political apathy manifested concretely in the 2023 general elections through observable indicators such as declining turnout and youth disengagement. This gap necessitates a systematic examination of the manifestations of political apathy in order to better understand the patterns of electoral withdrawal and their implications for democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

## III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The Study seeks to provide answers to the following questions:

- i. What factors were responsible for the declining voter turnout in Nigeria's 2023 general elections?
- ii. How did youth participation influence electoral engagement during Nigeria's 2023 general elections?

## IV. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to examine the manifestations of political apathy in Nigeria's 2023 general elections, with particular focus on voter turnout and youth participation. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Assess the factors responsible for the declining voter turnout in Nigeria's 2023 general elections.
- ii. Analyze the role of youth participation in shaping electoral engagement during Nigeria's 2023 general elections.

## V. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant because it enriches existing literature on electoral participation and democratic consolidation in Nigeria through a focused examination of how political apathy manifested during the 2023 general elections. An analysis of declining voter turnout and youth participation patterns provides empirical insight into trends that threaten democratic legitimacy and representative governance. The findings will assist the Independent National Electoral Commission, policymakers,

political parties, civil society organizations, and scholars in developing targeted strategies to increase voter engagement, strengthen institutional trust, and promote inclusive political participation. The study also lays a foundation for further research on electoral behavior and democratic sustainability in Nigeria and other emerging democracies experiencing similar patterns of citizen disengagement.

## VI. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Conceptual clarifications

#### Election

Election refers to a formal decision-making process through which citizens choose individuals to occupy public offices and represent their interests in government. It is a central mechanism of democratic governance, providing a structured and periodic opportunity for the electorate to express political preferences and confer legitimacy on political authority. According to Schumpeter (1942), elections constitute an institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions through a competitive struggle for the people's vote. In democratic systems, elections serve not only as a method of leadership selection but also as a means of ensuring accountability, responsiveness, and peaceful transfer of power.

Beyond leadership recruitment, elections function as instruments of political participation and civic engagement. They allow citizens to influence policy direction, evaluate the performance of incumbents, and reinforce democratic norms such as transparency and representation. In Nigeria, elections are conducted at federal, state, and local government levels under the supervision of the Independent National Electoral Commission, as provided for in the 1999 Constitution (as amended). However, the credibility and inclusiveness of elections determine their effectiveness; where electoral processes are perceived as flawed or untrustworthy, participation tends to decline, thereby weakening democratic consolidation.

#### Political Apathy

Political apathy refers to a state of indifference, disinterest, or disengagement from political processes and activities, particularly voting, civic discussions, and participation in public affairs. It reflects a withdrawal of citizens from active

involvement in governance, often expressed through low voter turnout, refusal to register as voters, failure to collect voting cards, or abstention from elections. Yakubu (2012) describes political apathy as a condition in which citizens perceive limited value in participating in political processes, while Abdullahi and Arabo (2023) argue that it may also function as a subtle form of political protest against institutions perceived as ineffective or unresponsive. In democratic systems, such disengagement poses serious concerns because active participation is essential for legitimacy and accountability.

Political apathy is often linked to factors such as distrust in electoral institutions, perceived electoral fraud, electoral violence, socio-economic hardship, and the belief that individual votes do not influence outcomes (Andza & Akuva, 2019; Ogu & Peter, 2023). When citizens doubt the transparency or fairness of elections, their sense of political efficacy declines, leading to reduced motivation to participate. In contexts like Nigeria, where voter turnout has steadily decreased despite rising voter registration, political apathy becomes visible not merely as private disinterest but as a measurable pattern of electoral withdrawal. If left unaddressed, sustained apathy can weaken democratic culture, reduce accountability, and limit the representativeness of elected governments.

#### Causes of Political Apathy in Nigeria

Political apathy in Nigeria is strongly linked to declining trust in electoral institutions and the perceived lack of credibility in the electoral process. Many citizens question the transparency of elections, particularly in relation to vote counting, result transmission, and institutional neutrality. When electoral bodies are viewed as ineffective or biased, confidence in the system weakens and citizens begin to doubt whether their participation can influence outcomes. Studies have shown that distrust in the Independent National Electoral Commission and concerns over electoral malpractice significantly discourage voter turnout (Ogu & Peter, 2023; Abdullahi & Arabo, 2023). In addition, recurring allegations of electoral fraud and inconsistent enforcement of electoral laws contribute to a sense of disillusionment, gradually reinforcing withdrawal from political engagement.

Socio-economic hardship and electoral insecurity further deepen political disengagement. High

unemployment, poverty, and rising living costs shift citizens' priorities toward immediate survival needs, reducing interest in civic participation (Oluwatusin & Abolarin-Egbebi, 2015). At the same time, fear of electoral violence, intimidation, and political clashes discourages many from attending polling units, particularly in politically tense areas (Achinulo, 2020). Disappointment with political leaders and parties also fuels apathy, as citizens perceive limited ideological differences and poor governance outcomes. When elections fail to produce tangible improvements in living conditions or accountability, cynicism grows, and non-participation becomes normalized.

#### Elections in Nigeria: Trends and Data

An examination of presidential election statistics in Nigeria from 1999 to 2023 reveals a striking pattern of widening disparity between registered voters and accredited voters, despite steady population growth. In 1999, out of 57,938,945 registered voters, 30,280,052 were accredited, reflecting a participation gap of 52 percent. This gap widened in 2003 to 69.08 percent before declining slightly in subsequent elections. Although the number of registered voters increased significantly from 57.9 million in 1999 to 93.47 million in 2023, the total number of accredited voters did not follow a similar upward trajectory. Instead, accredited voters dropped from 39,469,484 in 2011 to 25,286,616 in 2023, indicating declining electoral engagement over time.

Table 1: Statistics for the presidential elections from 1999 to 2023

Year of Election	Population	Registered Voters	Total No of Accredited Voters	Difference of registered voters and accredited voters (%)
1999	115, 672, 220	57,938,945	30,280,052	52
2003	129, 090, 197	60,823,022	42,018,735	69.08
2007	144, 125, 146	61,567,036	35,397,517	57.4
2011	155,215,570	73,528,040	39,469,484	53.68
2015	181,562,052	67,422,005	29,432,083	43.65
2019	200, 963, 599	82,344,107	28,614,190	34.75
2023	227,882,945	93,470,000	25,286,616	26.72

Source: Alexander & Ogoh, 2023; African Elections Database and INEC, 2023

The 2023 general election presents the most concerning trend in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. With a population of over 227 million and 93.47 million registered voters, only 25.29 million were accredited, producing a participation difference of 26.72 percent, the lowest recorded within the period under review. This persistent decline suggests that increased voter registration efforts have not translated into proportional electoral participation. Rather, the data point to growing political disengagement and possible erosion of public confidence in the electoral process. Overall, the trend demonstrates that while Nigeria's electoral system has expanded administratively in terms of registration, citizen turnout has steadily weakened, raising important concerns about democratic legitimacy and consolidation.

#### VII. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

This section reviews relevant empirical studies on voter turnout, institutional trust, and youth

participation in Nigeria to situate the present study within existing scholarship on political apathy and electoral engagement.

Abdullahi and Arabo (2023) examined voter apathy in Nigeria as a form of political protest, aiming to critically assess patterns of citizen participation and identify factors responsible for declining electoral turnout. Anchored on Political Efficacy Theory and Democratic Participation perspectives, the study adopted a qualitative descriptive methodology using secondary data from electoral reports, scholarly works, and historical voting statistics. The findings indicated that distrust in electoral institutions, dissatisfaction with governance, and perceived manipulation of election results contributed significantly to voter disengagement. The authors concluded that persistent apathy weakens democratic legitimacy and recommended strengthening institutional transparency, enhancing civic education, and rebuilding public confidence in the electoral system. However, the study focused broadly on historical patterns and did not provide a detailed

empirical analysis of the specific manifestations of apathy in the 2023 general elections.

Andza and Akuva (2019) investigated low voter turnout and its implications for democratic consolidation in Nigeria between 1999 and 2019. The study aimed to analyze determinants of declining participation and assess their impact on representative governance. Guided by Rational Choice Theory, the researchers used descriptive and analytical approaches based on secondary electoral data and survey evidence. Their findings revealed that electoral violence, weak institutional credibility, and disillusionment with political leadership significantly reduced voter turnout. The study concluded that sustained low participation poses risks to democratic consolidation and recommended improved electoral security and institutional reforms. Nevertheless, the research predates the 2023 elections and does not account for recent technological reforms or contemporary youth participation trends.

Ogu and Peter (2023) evaluated the role of the Independent National Electoral Commission in the conduct of the 2023 general elections, with the aim of assessing institutional performance and public trust. The study drew on Institutional Theory and Political Efficacy assumptions to examine how perceptions of electoral administration influence participation. Using qualitative analysis of reports, media sources, and official electoral data, the authors found that logistical challenges, delayed result transmission, and credibility concerns negatively affected public confidence. They concluded that institutional reforms are necessary to restore trust and recommended stronger accountability mechanisms and improved technological implementation. While the study highlights institutional weaknesses, it does not systematically examine how these issues translated into measurable manifestations such as youth disengagement or turnout differentials.

Christian (2023) analyzed voters' disposition and the outcome of the 2023 general elections, seeking to understand behavioral patterns and attitudinal factors influencing electoral participation. The study employed a survey-based methodology supported by descriptive statistics and was informed by Rational Choice Theory. Findings showed that economic hardship, insecurity, and skepticism about electoral fairness shaped voter decisions, leading to reduced

turnout in several regions. The study concluded that restoring citizen confidence requires credible elections and responsive governance, recommending expanded civic education and inclusive political processes. However, the research does not provide a comprehensive examination of generational participation gaps or a detailed trend analysis comparing registered and accredited voters, thereby leaving room for further empirical investigation such as the present study.

## VIII. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on Rational Choice Theory and Political Efficacy Theory, which together provide a structured explanation for voter behavior and the observable patterns of political apathy in Nigeria's 2023 general elections. Rational Choice Theory provides a useful foundation for understanding voter behavior and political apathy in democratic systems. Rooted in the works of scholars such as Anthony Downs (1957), the theory assumes that individuals are rational actors who make decisions through a cost-benefit analysis. In electoral contexts, citizens weigh the perceived benefits of voting, including influencing leadership selection and shaping public policy, against the potential costs such as time, financial expense, security concerns, and doubts about whether their vote will count. When the perceived costs outweigh the expected benefits, abstention becomes a rational choice. In relation to Nigeria's 2023 general elections, the theory helps explain declining voter turnout as a calculated response to economic hardship, logistical difficulties, insecurity, and skepticism about electoral credibility. Where voters perceive that outcomes are predetermined or governance will not significantly improve their welfare, participation appears less worthwhile.

Political Efficacy Theory complements this explanation by focusing on citizens' beliefs about their capacity to influence political processes. Political efficacy consists of internal efficacy, which reflects confidence in one's own political understanding and competence, and external efficacy, which relates to the belief that political institutions are responsive to citizens' actions. Higher levels of efficacy tend to encourage participation, while diminished efficacy often results in disengagement. In the Nigerian context, declining trust in electoral institutions and recurring allegations

of malpractice weaken external efficacy, as citizens question whether their involvement can produce meaningful change. At the same time, limited civic awareness and feelings of marginalization, particularly among youth, may reduce internal efficacy. When combined, Rational Choice Theory and Political Efficacy Theory provide a comprehensive framework for interpreting the manifestations of political apathy observed in the 2023 general elections, especially declining turnout and youth disengagement.

#### IX. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the manifestations of political apathy in Nigeria’s 2023 general elections, with particular emphasis on voter turnout and youth participation. The design was considered appropriate because it allowed for the collection of quantifiable data on attitudes, perceptions, and patterns of electoral engagement among registered voters. Primary data were obtained through structured questionnaires administered to respondents in

selected areas, while secondary data were sourced from official reports of the Independent National Electoral Commission, academic publications, and relevant electoral statistics. The combination of primary and secondary sources enhanced the reliability and depth of the analysis.

The population of the study comprised registered voters in selected Local Government Areas, and a representative sample was determined using an established sample size determination table to ensure adequate confidence and margin of error. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed, incorporating purposive selection of study areas, stratification based on location, and proportional random sampling to distribute questionnaires fairly across the selected regions. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as frequencies and percentages to identify turnout patterns and participation trends. This methodological approach ensured systematic examination of observable indicators of political apathy in the 2023 general elections.

#### X. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	188	58.0
	Female	136	42.0
	Total	324	100.0
Age	Below 30 years	24	7.5
	31–40 years	149	46.0
	41–50 years	105	32.5
	Above 50 years	45	14.0
	Total	324	100.0
Educational Level	Secondary/Diploma	21	6.5
	HND/Equivalent	90	28.0
	Bachelor’s Degree	173	53.5
	Master’s Degree	39	12.0
	Total	324	100.0
Residence	Rural	90	28.0
	Semi-Urban	121	37.5
	Urban	112	34.5
	Total	324	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The demographic distribution of respondents shows a moderate gender balance, with males constituting 57.9 percent (220 respondents) and females accounting for 42.1 percent (160 respondents). This indicates slightly higher male participation in the survey, although female representation remains substantial. In terms of age, the majority of respondents fall within the 31–40 years bracket, representing 46.3 percent of the sample, followed by those aged 41–50 years at 32.4 percent. Respondents above 50 years account for 13.9 percent, while those below 30 years represent only 7.4 percent. This suggests that the study predominantly captured individuals within the economically active age group, with comparatively lower representation from younger respondents.

Regarding educational attainment, more than half of the respondents (53.4 percent) possess a Bachelor’s degree, while 27.9 percent hold HND or equivalent qualifications. Those with Master’s degrees constitute 12.1 percent, and respondents with Secondary/Diploma qualifications represent 6.6 percent. The high proportion of tertiary-educated participants indicates that the responses were provided by individuals with sufficient educational exposure to understand electoral and political issues. In terms of residence, 37.6 percent of respondents reside in semi-urban areas, 34.5 percent in urban areas, and 27.9 percent in rural areas. This fairly balanced distribution across settlement types enhances the representativeness of the findings and allows for broader insight into electoral participation patterns across different residential contexts.

Research Question One: What factors were responsible for the declining voter turnout in Nigeria’s 2023 general elections?

Research Question Two: How did youth participation influence electoral engagement during Nigeria’s 2023 general elections?

Table 2: Youth Participation and Electoral Engagement in the 2023 General Elections

Age Group	Percentage of Registered Voters (%)	Actual Turnout (%)	Turnout Gap (%)
Youth (18–35 years)	40	25	15
Elderly (50+ years)	22	40	-18

Source: INEC Data, 2023

The table 4.2 shows that although youths (18–35 years) constituted 40 percent of registered voters, only 25 percent participated in the election, creating

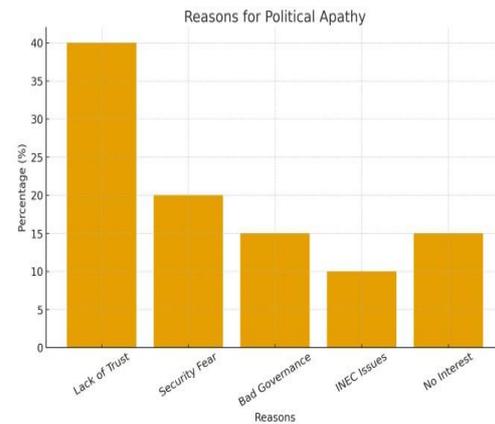


Figure 1: Factors Responsible for Political Apathy  
 Source: Field Survey, 2025

The Figure 1 on political apathy indicates that lack of trust in the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is the leading factor discouraging electoral participation, accounting for 40 percent of responses. This suggests that institutional credibility remains central to voter engagement, as a significant proportion of citizens perceive weaknesses in electoral transparency and result management. Electoral violence follows at 25 percent, highlighting the continued influence of insecurity and fear in shaping participation decisions, particularly in politically tense environments. Economic hardship represents 20 percent, reflecting how financial constraints and survival priorities may limit citizens’ willingness or ability to engage in electoral processes. Perceived electoral fraud accounts for 15 percent, indicating that concerns about vote manipulation and fairness still contribute to disengagement, although to a comparatively lesser extent than institutional distrust. Overall, the distribution demonstrates that structural and institutional factors, especially confidence in electoral management, play a more dominant role in explaining manifestations of political apathy than purely economic considerations.

a turnout gap of 15 percentage points. In contrast, elderly voters (50 years and above) represented 22 percent of registered voters but recorded a higher

turnout rate of 40 percent. This indicates that youth registration did not translate into proportional electoral participation. The disparity demonstrates that youth influence on electoral engagement was

weakened at the point of actual voting, suggesting the presence of structural, institutional, or attitudinal barriers that limited effective participation despite high registration levels.

Table 3: Attitudinal Factors that Influenced Youth Electoral Participation in the 2023 General Elections

Factor	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of trust in INEC	152	40.0
Electoral violence/insecurity	95	25.0
Economic hardship	76	20.0
Perceived electoral fraud	57	15.0
Total	380	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table 3 indicates that lack of trust in INEC was the most significant factor influencing youth disengagement, accounting for 40 percent of responses. Electoral violence and insecurity followed at 25 percent, suggesting that safety concerns played a notable role in discouraging participation among young voters. Economic hardship accounted for 20 percent, reflecting the impact of financial constraints and employment instability on youth engagement. Perceived electoral fraud represented 15 percent, indicating that skepticism about the integrity of the voting process further reduced motivation to participate. Overall, the distribution demonstrates that institutional distrust and security concerns were more influential in shaping youth electoral disengagement than purely economic factors.

## XI. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study show that lack of trust in the Independent National Electoral Commission emerged as the leading factor behind declining voter turnout in the 2023 general elections, accounting for 40 percent of responses. This result is consistent with Ogu and Peter (2023), who reported that concerns over electoral management and credibility weakened public confidence in the 2023 polls. Abdullahi and Arabo (2023) similarly contend that distrust in electoral institutions often translates into electoral withdrawal, sometimes as a subtle expression of dissatisfaction with governance. The broader consequence of this pattern is that institutional legitimacy becomes central to democratic participation. When citizens question the neutrality and transparency of the electoral body, participation declines regardless of improvements in voter registration or technological innovations.

Strengthening credibility, therefore, remains fundamental to reversing turnout decline.

The study further reveals a significant generational disparity in electoral engagement, as youths constituted 40 percent of registered voters but recorded only 25 percent turnout. This outcome aligns with Andza and Akuva (2019), who observed persistent youth disengagement despite high levels of registration, and Christian (2023), who noted that pre-election enthusiasm among young voters does not consistently translate into voting behavior. The significance of this finding lies in its long-term democratic consequences. Youth represent a substantial proportion of Nigeria's population, and sustained disengagement among this demographic could weaken political renewal and limit inclusive representation. If younger citizens remain active only in informal or digital spaces without participating in formal electoral processes, democratic institutions may struggle to reflect generational interests adequately.

In addition, the attitudinal factors shaping youth participation, particularly institutional distrust, insecurity, economic hardship, and perceived electoral fraud reinforce earlier studies linking political efficacy and socio-economic pressures to voter behavior. Yakubu (2012) argues that diminished political efficacy fosters sustained apathy, while Oluwatusin and Abolarin-Egbebi (2015) emphasize how economic hardship undermines democratic sustainability. These findings suggest that political apathy in Nigeria reflects structural challenges rather than mere individual indifference. The broader effect is a gradual erosion of civic culture, where citizens disengage from formal political processes due to accumulated

skepticism and material constraints. Addressing this pattern will require not only electoral reforms but also broader efforts to restore confidence in governance and improve socio-economic stability.

## XII. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the manifestations of political apathy in Nigeria's 2023 general elections were clearly reflected in declining voter turnout and significant youth disengagement. Despite high voter registration figures, especially among young people, actual participation remained disproportionately low, revealing a widening gap between electoral enthusiasm and voting behavior. The findings show that institutional distrust, electoral insecurity, economic hardship, and perceived electoral malpractice collectively shaped citizens' decisions to abstain, reinforcing patterns identified in previous studies while providing specific evidence from the 2023 electoral context. These trends highlight that political apathy in Nigeria is not merely a matter of indifference but a response to deeper structural and institutional challenges that weaken political efficacy and confidence in governance. Unless deliberate efforts are made to strengthen electoral credibility, enhance security, and rebuild public trust, declining participation may continue to undermine democratic legitimacy and representative governance in Nigeria.

## XIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the Independent National Electoral Commission strengthen transparency in result transmission and communication in order to rebuild public trust and reduce institutional skepticism.

Also, electoral security should also be enhanced through better coordination with security agencies to ensure safe voting environments, particularly for young voters. In addition, targeted civic education programs should be intensified to improve political efficacy among youths and convert registration enthusiasm into actual participation.

Finally, broader socio-economic policies that address unemployment and economic hardship are essential, as improving citizens' material conditions can indirectly encourage greater engagement in the electoral process.

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