YOUTH POLITICAL PERCEPTION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF DELTA STATE.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines youth perception of politics and good governance in Nigeria, with specific focus on Delta State. It explores how young people understand, interpret, and engage with political processes and governance structures, as well as the implications of their perceptions for democratic consolidation and development. The Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM) was adopted for this study for better clarification of youth perception of politics in Nigeria and how this translates into good governance in Delta State. Simple percentage and chi- square tests were used while 523 sampled respondents completed a structured questionnaire that was used to collect data from respondents. The study finds that youth are major population of electorates in Delta State and majority of them feels marginalised in the state politics which have placed an indelible negative perception of politics and governance in Delta State but with the advancement of social media and enlightenment, the youths are beginning to rediscover their voice and making efforts to properly place themselves at the driver seat of politics and governance. The study recommends amongst others, the need for government to prioritise political education and civic orientation programmes targeted at young people to enhance their understanding of governance processes and their role in democratic participation.

Keywords: *Youth, Politics, Governance, Good Governance, Perception, Delta State.*

Introduction

The view of youngsters toward politics and good governance in Nigeria has emerged as a critical topic of intellectual and public debate, notably the calculated role that young people play in democracy growth. Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, boasts a large youth population, whose involvement or apathy toward politics has a significant impact on the trajectory of governance and nation-building. Nonetheless, the perceived distance between political leaders and the youth has sparked conflicting views of politics as a catalyst for social development. Many young Nigerians regard politics as an arena dominated by corruption, nepotism, and elitism, limiting active engagement and reducing democratic consolidation. This study situates the discourse within the context of Delta State, examining how young people evaluate political leadership and governance outcomes at both the state and local levels.

Good governance encompasses the concepts of openness, accountability, inclusion, and the rule of law, which serve as the foundation for a functioning democracy (Ejumudo *et.al*, 2025). In Nigeria, however, the failure to sustain these principles has led to widespread disillusionment among the youth. The consequences are visible in the widening gap between political pomposity and socioeconomic realities such as unemployment, inadequate education, and a lack of infrastructure. Delta State, being an oil-producing region, presents a paradox of prosperity and underdevelopment, with government leaders frequently blamed for mishandling of wealth. This backdrop provides fertile ground for investigating how young people interpret the relationship between government performance and political orientations.

Historical practices, socioeconomic background, and exposure to civic education all have an impact on young people's attitudes about politics. In Nigeria, the post-independence political evolution, marked by military invasions, electoral malfeasance, and weak institutions, has instilled distrust in the younger generation. Many young people regard politics as a domain reserved for the older elite, where entry is chosen not by merit but by backing and money politics (Adogbeji & Erhenede, 2025). Such awareness undermines youth political engagement, perpetuating the cycle of poor representation and ineffective governance. In Delta State, these perceptions are exacerbated by ethnic politics and stalled development across local governments, influencing how young people assess governmental trustworthiness and performance.

Nonetheless, recent trends point to a gradual shift in youth perspectives, particularly with the rise of social media as a platform for political expression and mobilisation. Movements like the #EndSARS protests, as well as rising young participation in election reform advocacy, have shown that Nigerian youths are regaining political consciousness (Adogbeji & Erhenede, 2025). In Delta State, increasing activism implies a desire for accountability and inclusivity in governance. It also reflects a growing belief that political engagement may be an instrument for improvement rather than simply endorsing a faulty system. This shift demonstrates the possibility for youth-led democratic renewal, provided that institutional reforms and civic education are implemented appropriately.

Objectives of the study
   i.   assess the perception of youths towards politics and good governance in Delta State.

Hypothesis
H₀: There is no significant relationship between youth perception of politics and good governance in Delta State.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION
Concept of Politics

The term "politics" derives from the Greek word "politika". This term is derived from Aristotle's work on governance and governments, which influenced his perspective on "city affairs." Politics, is commonly defined as the ability to persuade and influence sovereign voters in order to provide political power and authority in the state's governmental processes. It is the science of governance that deals with the management of the state's external and internal affairs. The management of political, economic, social, and administrative affairs in the public sector has served as the foundation for state government. According to the definition of politics, the government's sovereign power must exert control over numerous state interests (Ejumudo *et al,* 2025). External affairs encompass political activities such as diplomatic interactions with other countries to provide public affairs support on international trade, as well as bilateral and multilateral relations that influence the country's political, social, educational, and economic activities. The art of governance includes internal affairs as well as administrative and sovereign authorities to pursue political agendas that are in the best interests of the political party, as well as development thrusts for the generation of common welfare in society (Ejumudo *et al,* 2025). This verifies public leaders' campaign promises about their ability to influence and persuade voters to support political platforms as a basis for evaluating political performance of state government officials.

Politics is the administration and management of government activities based on the development agendas of public officials' party memberships (Bueno 2013). In politics, party affiliation and political agenda define the overall political strategy for defining the development agenda that is best suited to job creation, social equality, and the promotion of human freedom, justice, dignity, and liberty for the common and general benefit of society. This is the political framework for overseeing and managing the state's government functions. Government fiscal management and administration revolve around critical areas such as income generation (taxation), budgetary measures (social service spending), and borrowing for development projects. Party memberships have historically served as the key political backing for governing and directing government functions. Politics must consider political parties since these groupings provide political power and influence in carrying out the state's governing directions (Ejumudo *et al*, 2025).

Political parties manipulate and influence people's attitudes toward government in order to achieve power and control over society. Political parties, being the fundamental component of political and social development concerned with public objectives, must deal with societal manipulation and influence. It must provide a manipulative approach to demonstrate efficiency, effectiveness, and economy in government affairs management (Bueno 2013). Politics is described as the use of deception and influence to convince people that government officials handled the state's political affairs successfully. Political ethics and moral standards have been the key concerns and issues in arguing for society's overall well-being. It is primarily concerned with the exercise of political power by various political parties in order to administer and manage the state's governmental functions. The political dynamics of government administration are continually present while addressing the society's growth perspective (Bueno, 2013).

The ultimate goal in politics is to gain political power and control over governmental activities through party affiliation. This is a prominent topic and worry in politics, because self-interest for communal recognition and respect, as well as self-actualization and social stratification, can have ethical and moral consequences in society. Political deception occurs when political influence and persuasion are employed to acquire the faith of the sovereign electorate.

Concept of Youth

Who is a young person? Youth is defined as 'a young man' in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. It is also defined as the era of life when one is young, especially before a child grows into an adult. The concept of a generally acceptable age range for determining if someone is considered a youth varies. As a result, it is difficult to define a specific age range that is commonly accepted for the purpose of using age to decide whether an individual is a youth or not. Even when an age range is given, an individual's genuine maturity may not correspond to their chorological age, as immature individuals can exist at any age. According to Galstyan (2019), youth is a period of transition from reliance to independence. Youth is a developmental stage between infancy and adulthood, not a specific age range (Hilker & Fraser, 2009).

Youth can be characterised by personal experience, namely an individual's level of reliance, which can be quantified in a variety of ways depending on cultural context. The level of reliance refers to how much young people continue to rely on their families emotionally and financially. Youth refer to age, however age can be a biological term or a social construct. A young man could get to the top of the sociopolitical pyramid by mobilising others. For some purposes, such as employment data, 'youth' can refer to anyone aged 14 to 21, although the British Youth Council defines youth as anyone under the age of 31 (Hilker & Fraser, 2009).

In the 2012 National Baseline Youth Survey, the National Bureau of Statistics projected that Nigeria's youth population (ages 15 to 35) was 64 million. Scholars contended that age-based definitions vary among cultures and time periods, and that it is more realistic to define youth by focusing on social processes in the transition to adulthood. As a result, youth is the stage at which people form their self-concepts. Peers, lifestyle, gender, and culture all influence young people's self-concept. It is the stage of a person's life when he makes important decisions that will affect his future. This is summarized in the words of Robert F. Kennedy, which are mentioned in the abstract above. According to Chief (Dr) Paul Olatunde Alabi, former Deputy Governor of Ekiti State, in the Forward of a book, "The word 'Youth' refers to the time when a person is young, or the state or quality of being young." A moment full of vitality. What matters, therefore, is not age, but the quality of youth and how well an individual possesses the related attributes. As a result, the gun is crucial, but the man holding it is even more so (Turnbull, 2020).

Concept of Good Governance

According to Udeh (2017), governance is the process of converting societal needs into tangible activities. Governance is the growth of governing systems in which the distinction between the public and private sectors has become blurred and societal needs are increasingly served.

Adegbami and Adepoju (2017) define governance as the use of political power to direct a state's economic development. It focuses on utilizing a state's resources to support its development. The United Nations (UN) defines governance as the activities of all political and administrative organisations in their respective countries. Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) defines governance as the control over a country's economic, policy, and legal characteristics. In general, governance refers to the process of making decisions and determining which policies will and will not be implemented.

In the 1990s, the World Bank was the first international organisation to include and publicize the concept of good governance into funding agreements for developing countries. The concept of good governance was described in its 1992 report "Governance and Development" as the use of authority to control a country's economic and social resources in order to promote development. National and international organisations regularly use the term "good governance." Good governance aims to prevent corruption, examine minority perspectives, incorporate oppressed people's voices into decision-making, and actively respond to the community's current and future needs (Turnbull, 2020).

Oguma, Adogbeji, and Ejumudo (2025) define good governance as a collection of eight concepts. Participation in the concept of good governance gives everyone the option to express their opinions through institutions or representatives. Furthermore, everyone has the freedom to associate and express themselves. To achieve effective governance, the country's legal structure, including human rights law, must be applied impartially. Transparency necessitates that all policies developed and implemented by the government follow existing regulations. Furthermore, there must be assurances that any policy-related information is available to all, particularly those who are directly affected by it. Good governance necessitates organisations and processes that try to serve all stakeholders within a fair timeframe. When the decision-making process cannot accommodate everyone's preferences, the decision must, at the very least, be one that everyone can accept and will not harm anyone. Good governance promotes fairness in the community. Everyone has an equal opportunity to maintain and improve their well-being. Every decision-making process and its institutions must be able to produce results that meet the needs of the entire community. The government must also make efficient use of community resources. All institutions involved in good governance are fully accountable to the public in order to increase social quality and accountability (Oguma, Adogbeji, & Ejumudo, 2025).

Good Governance is an initial policy for developing strong determination in which decision makers generate points of view after a period of consensus in the decision-making institution. The major purpose of the organisation in question is to create productive policies for institutional production. The ruling machine's infrastructure must be reformed. The identification of social and political difficulties is expected on organisational mechanisms that necessitate administration for the implementation strategy. As a result, a strong political and social structure is required to reinforce economic ideals, which can be achieved through excellent governance. Good governance is the sole method to freely grant fundamental rights (Oguma, Adogbeji, & Ejumudo, 2025). Good governance requires public servants to use public resources wisely and effectively. Good governance requires using authority while adhering to transparency, accountability, probity, and the rule of law. Udeh (2017) defines good governance as enhanced service delivery, public engagement in decision-making, democracy, rule of law, judicial independence, election integrity, press freedom, equality before the law, and the inclusion of marginalised groups in politics. Good governance encourages gender equality, accountability, and transparency.

The World Bank classifies good governance into two categories. To begin, Good Governance refers to the political system of an organisation, institution, or government that produces a strong power exercise mechanism through valid votes from the grassroots to the highest levels and provides an administrative scale for regional progress. The exercise of political power offers a methodical plan for long-term growth reform, with a focus on national reformation to ensure national integrity in social and economic development. Second, good governance provides social and economic resources that benefit human development. The method for creating a Social Progressive environment for economic development is complicated for the common person. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is inspired to redefine good governance through civil servant capacity building, staff incentive programmes, administrative values, financial devolution, and stakeholder engagement (Ojo, 2018).

Youth and Politics in Nigeria

Nigeria's political history will be incomplete without the unmistakable imprint of youth participation and engagement. Nigerian youths' pre-independence initiatives contributed significantly to Nigeria's national independence. Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Chief Anthony Enahoro, and other proponents of Nigerian independence were young students. They started their independence campaign as student union activists and eventually created powerful factions to resist colonial domination. Anthony Enahoro was approximately twenty-one years old when he submitted the motion for Nigeria's independence, and General Yakubu Gowon {Rtd) was only third-one when he became Nigeria's Head of State. Late Isaac Adaka Boro, a recent University of Nigeria Nsukka graduate, was in his thirties when he founded the Niger Delta Volunteer Force and battled for his people's independence. A look at these people's life reveals that, as young men, they confronted adversity, dark moments, and an apparently impenetrable future, yet they rose to the occasion and made a difference (Afolayan 2019).

In Nigeria, when a person reaches the age of 18, he is considered full-age and is eligible to vote as an adult. This is mentioned in Section 24(4) of the 1999 Federal Republic of Nigeria Constitution (as amended). Politically, this implies that an 18-year-old Nigerian can vote in any election because the country practices universal adult suffrage. However, in order to contest in elections or present himself for election in Nigeria, he or she must have met the age minimum for the office for which he or she is running, as provided in the Constitution and other relevant legislation (Afolayan, 2019). According to Sida (2010), youth political participation includes political activism, civic life, active citizenship, and policy making.

Youth and politics in Nigeria play a vital role in understanding the dynamics of democratic participation,

governance, and national development. Youth, who account for more than 60% of Nigeria's population (about 80 million people), play a crucial role in the country's political climate, serving as both potential change agents and victims of systematic marginalisation. More than 70% are thought to remain unemployed, despite having relevant work experience and other job-related qualifications (Adogbeji & Erhenede, 2025). The dangers and consequences of youth unemployment and inactivity are well understood. The projected scenario is consistent with present trends in youth political participation in Nigeria. We still rank at the bottom of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Food, shelter, and clothing remain the most pressing needs of Nigerian youth, and the outlook remains bleak. Nigerian youth have historically played transformative roles in the struggle for independence and democratisation; however, modern politics frequently marginalises them due to structural barriers such as economic hardship, godfatherism, limited access to political capital, and weak institutional support. These challenges have led to widespread political apathy, cynicism, and disillusionment among young people, reducing their contribution to democratic consolidation.

In recent years, however, there has been a rise in youth political awareness and activism. Movements such as the "Not Too Young to Run" campaign and the #EndSARS protests have highlighted Nigerian youth's ability to mobilise for political reform and demand accountability from the state, similar to youth movements in other African countries. Young Nigerians have expanded the scope of political debate through social media and digital platforms, creating new opportunities for civic involvement and participatory governance (Adogbeji & Erhenede, 2025). Despite these advances, the translation of youth engagement into formal political power remains limited, as political parties generally lack internal democracy and continue to elect the same elite class that now dominates Nigerian politics. According to Offiong and Badmus (2018), Nigerian youth are eager to participate in politics as the global spotlight shines on their activities. However, the necessary climate is lacking. Olufowobi (2018) believes that all that is required to increase youth participation in politics is an enabling atmosphere.

The goal is to transfer young people's political knowledge into long-term participation and leadership. This necessitates intentional institutional reforms that promote inclusivity, political education, and the elimination of socioeconomic barriers to youth participation. Strengthening democratic institutions, providing mentorship opportunities, and expanding access to political funds can all help to create a more equitable political environment. Finally, the future of Nigerian democracy is determined by the extent to which young people can engage and make decisions in the government process, rather than simply voting or protesting.

Youth and Good Governance in Nigeria

Youth and good governance in Nigeria are closely linked, since young people account for a substantial proportion of the country's population and are a driving force for social transformation, political renewal, and long-term development. Good governance, as characterised by transparency, accountability, participation, and adherence to the rule of law, requires adolescents to actively participate in decision-making processes. Despite their statistical strength and potential, Nigerian youth are usually excluded from political and governance structures due to systemic impediments such as economic exclusion, limited access to education, unemployment, and the prevalence of gerontocratic politics. This marginalisation not only stifles innovation and democratic progress, but it also creates political apathy and unhappiness among young people (Ojo 2018).

Youth participation in governance is essential for developing open and inclusive political systems. Empirical research has demonstrated that countries with active youth participation get better governance results and faster development. In Nigeria, youth-led movements like "Not Too Young to Run" have shown that young people can fight institutional inequality and demand political reform (Adogbeji & Erhenede, 2025). Nonetheless, the institutional environment is frequently unfriendly to their objectives, with concerns about electoral manipulation, corruption, and limited access to political funding hampering effective young representation. As a result, significant youth engagement requires not only legislative inclusion, but also capacity building, civic education, and the creation of enabling settings in which young people can contribute to government without fear of being bullied or alienated.

Finally, good governance in Nigeria necessitates capitalising on the demographic advantage of youth and incorporating their perspectives into national policy discussions. A governance system that prioritises youth involvement fosters accountability, social justice, and creativity in public administration. Furthermore, providing young Nigerians with education, skill development, and equal political access will increase democratic participation and institutional legitimacy (Ogunyemi, 2020). Thus, for Nigeria to attain long-term prosperity and political stability, significant efforts must be made to reposition young people as active participants in government rather than passive recipients of policy outcomes.

Youth Perception of Politics and Good Governance in Nigeria

Youth perspectives of politics and good governance in Nigeria have shifted considerably over time, impacted by socioeconomic realities, political experiences, and technology advancements. Several Nigerian youths regard politics as a sphere dominated by the old, often connected with corruption, electoral malpractice, and a lack of accountability. This image has resulted in widespread political indifference and despair among young people, who feel excluded from meaningful participation in governance. The continuance of poverty, unemployment, and poor governance generates the notion that political participation gives little tangible value to ordinary young people, undermining trust in democratic institutions.

However, in recent years, there has been a progressive shift in this stance, owing primarily to increased political awareness and civic engagement through digital channels. The rise of social movements like the #EndSARS protest in 2020 demonstrates Nigerian teens' growing understanding of how governance affects their financial well-being. Social media has provided an alternative platform for political mobilisation, discourse, and accountability, allowing young people to challenge traditional power structures and demand transparency (Adogbeji & Erhenede, 2025). This trend implies that, while skepticism exists, young Nigerians are becoming

more conscious of the need of actively participating in political processes rather than disengaging.

Young people have demonstrated their ability to improve the world via their passion, energy, and ingenuity. Youth political participation should aspire for full inclusion. It is insufficient to educate or employ kids to prevent them from engaging in wicked behaviour. Many of the few young people who join in political activities do so out of a sense of unfairness (political exclusion), rather than a lack of education or unemployment. As a result, any programmes aiming at avoiding teenage violence must carefully consider how to promote political, economic, and social inclusion (Zohdy 2017). Overall, young people should be regarded as active participants in democratic processes and practices.

Youth attitudes toward politics and good governance have far-reaching implications for Nigeria's democratic development. When young people see governance as inclusive, transparent, and focused on the common good, they are more inclined to participate in politics, which helps to strengthen democratic institutions. In contrast, persistent distrust in the political system can exacerbate instability and destroy institutional legitimacy. As a result, promoting civic education, youth empowerment, and inclusive governance is vital for shifting perceptions and raising a generation of politically engaged people committed to accountability and national progress.

Theoretical Framework

The Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM) was used as an applicable theoretical framework in this paper. The notion proposed by Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady in their seminal work "Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics" (1995). The Civic Voluntarism Model highlights three factors that influence political participation: resources, psychological involvement, and recruitment networks. Time, money, and civic knowledge are all required for effective political participation. Political curiosity, political knowledge, and a sense of political efficacy are the characteristics that drive people to participate in politics; these are referred to as psychological engagement. Participation in recruiting networks is dependent on invites from family, friends, or organisations, emphasising the value of social ties in politics (Eboigbe & Ajisebiyawo, 2024).

The Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM) is an effective framework for studying youth political perceptions and good governance in Nigeria, notably in Delta State. According to this paradigm, individuals' political participation is heavily influenced by their resources, psychological engagement, and recruitment networks. Applying this to Delta State's youth, their political view and involvement are influenced by their civic skills, time, and financial resources to participate in government activities. Many young people express an interest in governance, but are hampered by restricted access to political education, economic difficulties, and exclusion from decision-making platforms. Furthermore, the absence of recruitment by political elites and civic organisations reduces their motivation and ability to participate effectively. Thus, improving youth political perspective and advancing good governance in Delta State necessitates more civic education, economic development, and inclusive political structures that enable voluntary and meaningful youth participation in government processes.

Methodology

Using the survey approach, the study used a descriptive research design. The data were presented and analysed using simple percentage and chi-square analysis. Youths in Delta State (Asaba, Warri and Ughelli) was used for this study. The purposive sampling techniques was employed to choose the survey respondents. A structured questionnaire was employed as the data gathering tool. There are two sections to the questionnaire. The two sections of the instrument correspond to the research questions that were developed for the study. The four-point Likert scale was scored as follows: 4 for strongly agree, 3 for agree, 2 for strongly disagreed and 1 for disagreed.

Result and Discussion of Findings

Out of the five hundred and sixty two (562) questionnaire, only five hundred and twenty three (523) were retrieved. This suggests that thirty-nine copies of the instrument were misplaced. This is sufficient for data analysis since it shows that 93.1% of the questionnaire were returned and 6.9% were lost. Thus, the 523 collected questionnaire served as the basis for the data analysis.

Table 1: Distribution of respondent based on gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	319	61
Female	204	39
Total	523	100

Source: Field Work 2025

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents based on gender. 319 respondents of 61% were male while 204 respondents of 39% were females. Thus, male respondents constituted the majority.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondent Based on Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
15-19 Yrs	85	16.3
20-24Yrs	17	3.3
25-29Yrs	52	9.9
30-34Yrs	95	18.2
35-39Yrs	119	22.8
40-44Yrs	74	14.1
45 yrs and above	81	15.5
Total	523	100

Source: Field Work 2025

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents based on age. 85 respondents of 16.3% were 15-19 years old, 17 respondents of 3.3% were 20-24 years old, 52 respondents of 9.9% were 25-29 years old, 95 respondents of 18.2% were 30-34 years old, 119 respondents of 22.8% were 35-39 years old, 74 respondents of 14.1% were 40-44 years old, while 81 respondents of 15.5% were 45 years old and above. Thus, this study was dominated by age between 35-39 years old.

Table 3: Distribution of respondent based on educational qualification

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
SSCE	136	26
OND/HND	106	20.3
B.Sc	192	36.7
M.Sc	68	13
Ph.D	21	4
Total	523	100

Source: Field Work 2025

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents based on their educational qualification. 136 respondents of 26% were SSCE holders, 106 respondents of 20.3% were OND/HND holders, 192 respondents of 36.7% were B.Sc holders, 68 respondents of 13% have M.Sc, and 21 respondents of 4% have Ph.D. Thus, this study was dominated by B.Sc respondents.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondent Based on Religion

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christianity	420	80.3
Islam	20	3.8
ATR	44	8.4
Others	39	7.5
Total	523	100

Source: Field Work 2025

Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents based on their religion. 420 respondents of 80.3% were Christians, 20 respondents of 3.8% were Islam, 44 respondents of 8.4% belong to African Traditional Religion (ATR), 39 respondents of 7.5 does not belong to any of the above religion. Thus, this study was dominated by Christian respondents.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondent Based on Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	264	50.5
Married	192	36.7
Divorced	67	12.8
Total	523	100

Source: Field Work 2025

Table 5 shows the distribution of respondents based on their marital status. 264 respondents of 50.5% were single, 192 respondents of 36.7 respondents were married, while 67 respondents of 12.8% were divorced. Thus, single respondents constituted the majority.

Research Question

Is there any relationship between perception of youths towards politics and democratic governance in Delta State?

Table 6: Simple percentage response of sampled respondents on the relationship between perception of youths towards politics and democratic governance in Delta State.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D	%A	%D
1	Youths perceive that their voices and contributions are often marginalised in the political and governance structures of Delta State.	211	189	68	55	76.5	23.5
2	The attitude of youths towards voting and political activities is influenced by their perception of fairness in electoral processes in Delta State.	168	191	86	78	68.6	31.4
3	Corruption, political marginalisation, and lack of inclusiveness in governance discourage youth participation in Delta State.	222	167	66	68	74.4	25.6
4	Political education and awareness campaigns positively shape youths' perception of democracy and governance in Delta State.	211	179	90	43	74.6	25.4

Source: field Work 2025

Table 6 shows the simple percentage of respondent on perception of youths towards politics and democratic governance in Delta State. 76.5% of respondents agreed that youths perceive that their voices and contributions are often marginalised in the political and governance structures of Delta State while 23.5% of respondents disagreed. 68.6% of respondents agreed that the attitude of youths towards voting and political activities is influenced by their perception of fairness in electoral processes in Delta State while 31.4% of respondents disagreed. 74.4% of respondents agreed that corruption, political marginalisation, and lack of inclusiveness in governance discourage youth participation in Delta State while 25.6% of respondents disagreed. 74.6% of respondents agreed that political education and awareness campaigns positively shape youths' perception of democracy and governance in Delta State while 25.4% of respondents disagreed.

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between youth perception of politics and democratic governance in Delta State.

Table 7: Chi-square analysis of questionnaire for the relationship between youth perception of politics and democratic governance in Delta State.

Sources of Variation	Responses		Df	X2-Cal	X2-Crit	Alpha Level	Decision
	Observed	Expected					
Strongly Agree (SA)	812	130.8					
Agree (A)	726	130.8	3	124.58	7.82	0.05	Significant Ho, Rejected
Strongly Disagree (SD)	305	130.8					
Disagree (D)	249	130.8					

Source: Field Work 2025

Table 7 shows that there is significant relationship between youth perception of politics and democratic governance in Delta State. The calculated value of 124.58 is greater than the chi-square table value of 7.82. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between youth perception of politics and democratic governance in Delta State.

Discussion of Findings

Analysis of the research question revealed that there is relationship between perception of youths towards politics and democratic governance in Delta State. The study further revealed that youths perceive that their voices and contributions are often marginalised in the political and governance structures of Delta State, the attitude of youths towards voting and political activities is influenced by their perception of fairness in electoral processes in Delta State, that corruption, political marginalisation, and lack of inclusiveness in governance discourage youth participation in Delta State and that political education and awareness campaigns will positively shape youths' perception of democracy and governance in Delta State. This was in congruence with the work of Zohdy (2017) where he argued that any programmes aimed at preventing teenage violence must carefully evaluate how to encourage their political, economic, and social inclusion. He also pointed out that young people must be viewed as active participants in democratic processes and practices. He submits that youth perceptions of politics and good

governance have far-reaching ramifications for Nigeria's democratic growth. When young people see governance as inclusive, transparent, and focused toward public good, they are more likely to participate in politics, which strengthens democratic consolidation. The study is also in agreement with Adogbeji and Erhenede (2025) when they argued in their work that growth of social movements such as the #EndSARS protest in 2020 illustrates Nigerian teenagers' rising awareness of governance's impact on their socioeconomic well-being.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Following the findings of this study, we conclude that youth are major population of electorates in Delta State and majority of them feels marginalised in the state politics which have placed an indelible negative perception of politics and governance in Delta State but with the advancement of social media and enlightenment, the youths are beginning to rediscover their voice and making efforts to properly place themselves at the driver seat of politics and governance.

Considering the discussion and conclusion of this study, the following are recommended.

i. The government should prioritise political education and civic orientation programmes targeted at young people to enhance their understanding of governance processes and their role in democratic participation.

ii. Political leaders and institutions must create inclusive platforms that encourage youth engagement in policymaking and governance at both local and state levels.

iii. Educational institutions should integrate civic and governance studies into their curricula to cultivate political awareness and critical thinking among students.

iv. Political parties should adopt transparent and merit-based systems that allow young people to actively participate and contest in elections without discrimination or financial barriers.

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