

Civic participation: the nexus between the Collar and her commission

Partecipazione civica: il nesso tra il collare e la sua commissione

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Abstract

The issue of civic responsibility and participation has been on the front burner for some decades now. So many agencies and social institutions have attempted to foster civic participation among citizens. Nigeria, being a developing nation, is groping with the low participation of citizens in politics. The Catholic Church has also not been left out in this quest to involve youths in politics. The major finding was that the Justice, development and peace movement (JDPM) has been instrumental in promoting civic responsibility among youths. It was, however, recommended that the government should synergize efforts in collaborating with the youth to have a responsible citizenry.

Keywords: Justice development and peace movement, civic participation, assessment, youths, civility.

Sommario

La questione della responsabilità civica e della partecipazione è al centro dell'attenzione ormai da decenni. Moltissime agenzie e istituzioni sociali hanno cercato di promuovere la partecipazione civica tra i cittadini. La Nigeria, essendo una Nazione in via di sviluppo, si scontra con la scarsa partecipazione dei cittadini alla politica. Anche la Chiesa cattolica non è stata esclusa da questa ricerca volta a coinvolgere i giovani in politica. Il risultato principale è stato che il Movimento per la pace e lo sviluppo della giustizia (JDPM) ha svolto un ruolo determinante nel promuovere la responsabilità civica tra i giovani. Tuttavia, è stato raccomandato al governo di collaborare in sinergia con i giovani per formare una cittadinanza responsabile.

Parole chiave: movimento per la giustizia, lo sviluppo e la pace, partecipazione civica, valutazione, giovani, cittadinanza.

Introduction

Citizenship education, which is not alien to most democratic dispensations, has been on the front burner in many fora at local, regional, national, and international levels. Good citizens invariably translate to a good society or community. Howe (2010), observed that Canadian youths are less politically engaged due to declining interest and less community-

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mindfulness. Nigeria has been at the forefront of encouraging good citizenship. With its strong history and cultural affinity, this Country has more than 250 ethnic groupings. Culturally, informal or indigenous education has taught citizenship education, which is exhibited in civic activities like thrift called *Esusu* in Yoruba language, community services, sanitation and cleanliness of the environment, feudalism, grassroots mobilization led by women, traditional methods of protest, to mention a few. Presently and non-formally, the country has extended the frontiers of civic participation through many agencies, like Yale, and community engagements. Formally, it is taught through social studies, civic education at different fora, to mention a few. The Catholic Church is not an exception to this. One of the organizations run by the Catholic Church that has a permanent structure is the Justice Development and Peace Movement (JDPM), which is run by pontifical commissions and councils. Specifically based on the demand of the Second Council of Vatican City (1965), as a means of putting the Church's teaching on justice and peace into practice. On January 6, 1967, Pope Paul VI established a Commission with an experimental mandate. This Commission's composition and guidelines were provided in the *motu proprio*, *Catholicam Christi Ecclesiam*. Pope Paul VI reiterated, the essence of its establishment is to bring into the people of God a full consciousness of their mission today. This is called Justice and Peace, as it aptly describes its programme and its goals. This department's special responsibilities include advancing, strengthening, and continuing the development of the Church's social teaching, which is a compilation of instructions on the person and continuity that are mostly drawn from papal, conciliar, and episcopal texts. The theologians' writings and several academics that explore, discuss, and in addition make submissions are also included. These social teachings often contain the Church's statement and position on various social issues.

In addition to these particular responsibilities, the Council is saddled with educating the faithful about the Church's concerns with justice and peace and assisting the faithful in realizing their social responsibility. The Council showcases Church documents on justice and peace concerns, bringing them to a broader audience so that ordinary Christians can draw inspiration from them for their daily lives. The endorsement of the drives and aims by the Holy Father on the 10th December, 1976 further confirmed the Church's commitment to the values of justice and peace. The Commission's general goals are outlined in the *motu proprio* *Iustitia et Pax*. These include examining and studying justice-related issues from the perspectives of doctrine, pastoral practice, and apostolate in order to fully awaken God's people to these issues and to recognize their role and responsibilities in the areas of justice, people development, human advancement, peace, and human rights. The Commission's task is to investigate how Christians' legislation might be written expressly to deal with such issues. It also helps spur God's people to live moral lives in the previously listed areas and to share their faith with the world. In 1988, Pope John Paul II further defined these goals according to Pastor Bonus's Apostolic Legislation. According to the document, the Commission's objectives are: to encourage fairness and harmony according to the gospel and the social doctrine of the Church, advocate for people and communities, gather information and findings for drawing conclusions on human rights, provide an engagement with the State, plan, prepare and facilitate yearly World Day of Peace.

The experts who have investigated influencing the youths to be involved in the matter of civic democracies through programs like the Justice Development and Peace Movement (JDPM), stress the need to empower youths for social justice and development initiative. Analyzing the dynamics of youth participation, Sutton (2023) highlights that social justice is

instrumental in youth and community development, theorizing about how participation processes are constructing the youth's power and contributing to positive community change. Youth involvement in civic activities has shifted from being seen as a duty or a right to a necessary platform through which young people can gain personal growth as well as effect change within society. Martini *et al.* (2023) also explain an education-based project related to social justice to increase the level of civic youth engagement. Through civic education, youths acquire essential competencies that can make them participate in social justice processes such as JDPM, hence encouraging them to be part of the community development processes that seek to transform the system. Stewart and McDermott (2004) observed that civic engagement is more likely developed among people with politicized identities, an activist stance, and an interest in diverse peers. The form of civic engagement – focused on transmission of parental values or on social change – is shaped by different generations' relative tendency to identify horizontally, with each other, or vertically, with previous generations. The intersection of late adolescence with periods of intense social discontinuity increases within-generation identification and decreases interest in cross-generational transmission of values. In addition, young American women in the middle to late 20th century experienced such a confluence of factors. Thus, forms of civic engagement are shaped not only by individual experiences but also by cohort or generational identity.

Youth civic engagement can be explained from a developmental and liberation psychology point of view where participation is the key developmental step as well as political activism against oppression (Watts and Flanagan, 2007). This is in line with the objectives of JDPM that center on the advancement of peace and justice through the participation of the public. Furthermore, according to Korich and Fields (2023), civic involvement is an effective way of giving young people an opportunity to make a change in the health and well-being of other people in their society, which of course is inclusive of other social justice causes. As Lardier *et al.* (2020) have outlined, the synthesis of community intervention and psychological self-promoting makes it evident how civil society engagement programs, particularly for marginalized youth, improve their perceived belongingness and cohesiveness and improve their justice and peace movement activism.

1. Structures of Justice development and peace commission (JDPC)

The Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) sometimes called Justice and Peace Movement (JPM) functions within the ambit of religious, civic, or governmental establishments. It is usually connected to the Catholic Church or other faith-based or human rights organizations. Its objective is to promote social justice, human rights, peacebuilding, and reconciliation. The organogram of the commission may vary based on different countries or dioceses. However, striking similarities may still exist. The other objectives of the commission hinge on the pure motive of evangelism and winning souls for Christ. This is made possible through the various hierarchy of the Church and down to the parish, which the code of canon law termed as parochial. The family, which is the first Church, also helps in the propagation of the objectives of JDPM, done via basic or small Christian communities. There is usually a liaison officer between the family and the commission. These community-based contacts are in communication with the Commission's area committee. The Diocesan Order oversees the Parish Committee. At the regional level, the National Commission for Justice and Peace is established by the combination of all Diocesan Commissions. It reports to the Pontifical

Commission for Justice and Peace in the Vatican. Historically, JDPM or JDPC program has thirty resolutions passed during the Pan-African Justice and Peace Conference, which took place in Lesotho from 29th May to 3rd June, 1988. The major resolution so ratified was the urgent necessity for the various Episcopal Conferences to create long-term national and regional Justice and Peace structures, especially for those where none existed or where the ones that did exist were insufficient. The Justice and Peace Commission's formation was emphasized by Holy Father Pope John Paul II in the post-synodal Apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* when he said *inter alia*:

the Church must endeavor to play her prophetic role and be the voice of the voiceless. [...] But to achieve this effectively, the Church as a community of faith must be an energetic witness to Justice and Peace in her structures and in the relationship among her members. [...] In what concerns the promotion of justice and especially the defense of fundamental human rights, the Church Apostolate cannot be improvised (*s.p.*).

Bearing in mind that in many African countries, gross violations of human dignity and rights are being perpetrated, the Holy Father asks the Episcopal Conferences to establish, where they do not yet exist, Justice and Peace Commissions at various levels. These will charge Christian Communities to their evangelical responsibilities in the defense of human rights. The Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) placed a premium on justice and peace as a follow-up to the assignment by the supreme pontiff¹. However, it should not be assumed that Justice and Peace in the Nigerian Church began there, as it has been present in practically all dioceses under other titles. However, inspired by the renewed energy that has emerged with the African convergence, the Nigerian Catholic Bishops Conference launched a structural design project meant to enable the Justice and Peace Commission's seamless operation. The eight-point *Plan of Action* on justice and peace, which was drafted, was succeeded by two days training session in 1995, which intended to consider the accomplishments of the African convergence, demonstrates this newfound zeal and commitment. The Bishops' Plan of Action centres on prioritizing justice and peace, establishing a peace commission at the parish level, fostering solidarity among stakeholders, to mention a few. A national workshop was organized in Jos, Nigeria, from April 15-19, 1996, for all those involved in justice and peace from all of the dioceses of the Nigerian Church, with the aim of further implementing this Plan of Action. This gathering was called to brainstorm how to carry out the Plan of Action locally so that the Church, which has long been the voice of the voiceless, might back up its words with incredible deeds that advance justice, peace, and development. To tackle the difficulties of justice and peace in their particular domains, the national workshop's difficulties were transformed into a variety of initiatives in the many dioceses that comprise the Nigerian Church. Furthermore, the Conference of the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria founded the JDP Commission, which operated as a separate division under the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria until 2000. The Department of Church and Society now oversees the JDP as a result of the most recent reorganization: the arrangement consists of national, regional, provincial, diocesan, parish, and outstations. At every level, the touch of justice, development, and peace is felt. After considering the Justice Development and Peace Commission's brief history, this study will examine the commission's function in civic engagement and critically evaluate its roles among adolescents based on the diocese.

2. Civic participation

Civic engagement is the process through which people get involved in a political and social process using democratic mechanisms in the formulation of public policies with the intention of improving the society and fighting for justice. Youth civic engagement is relevant in community progression since it fosters young people's involvement in the transformation process (Pospieszna and Galus, 2020). This is not a voter or volunteer drive, a *get out the vote* campaign; this is an effort to activate youths and instil in them that it is necessary to be active, and valued members of society. Civic engagement youth development programs, which involve social justice education projects, assist young people to develop self-leadership skills and organizational skills, and skills in addressing justice and equity issues. Mirra and Garcia (2017) also further argue that if civic participation is only viewed through modern technology in the form of a multimodal public sphere, youths are empowered to think critically and participate in creating their own civic space in today's digitally connected society. Civic participation also enhances psychological and social power, whereby the socially disadvantaged groups are empowered. Martini *et al.* (2023) explain how civic engagement, when regarded in terms of developmental social self and liberation psychology, assists the youth in the fight against oppression and promotion of justice. Lardier *et al.* (2020) also state that the experience of civic participation enhances the ethnic identity as well as social justice orientation, therefore, it promotes a psychological sense of community among adolescents from the ethnic minority. If youths engage in civic activities, they not only change their environments for the better but also establish a long-term personal and enhanced sense of self-efficacy and empowerment. This is where the civic education programs have been stressed in the study by Pospieszna and Galus (2020) as the ones that would help the youth get equipped with relevant tools to foster active participation in democratic and communal activities. Rivett (2015) argued that countries like Britain, France, and the USA are adjudged stable democracies, though with moribund or low levels of political engagement. African communities are, on the flip side, purportedly still in the early stages of democratic development, with differing degrees of success. While some democracies like Zimbabwe are construed to have failed, Botswana flourishes with stable and enduring democratic institutions. This is the testament that African institutions and establishments may encourage civic participation and civic engagement, and not necessarily be regimented to the societies being the cradle of democracy.

Since civic involvement affects social decorum, it has become a popular discussion point in most literary works, civic studies, community education, as well as social studies education. It includes all of the following: voting, volunteering, taking part in group activities, community gardening, running for office, etc. It might be extremely advantageous to the general public or participants in a specific micro institution, confirming the importance of civic engagement by enabling citizens to shape local values, policies, and government goals. As a result, there is an increase in trust, communities become stronger and happier, and residents who are frequently disregarded and ignored gain agency. Modern democracy depends on civic engagement, which is also a right that all citizens are urged to exercise as a duty to the government. Concern over the apparent decline in civic engagement, however, has grown as social, economic, and cultural changes are thought to be harming people's sense of civic duty and awareness. Ballard *et al.* (2015) in a study observed that intercultural factors can work in the interest of political or civic participation among youths of different cultures,

orientations, and colouration in the USA. In their study, it was discovered that first- and second-generation Latino and Asian youth and non-immigrants showed more similarities than differences in civic motivation. Survey and interview data revealed that youth from immigrant backgrounds were more motivated to volunteer by instrumental reasons compared to non-immigrants. Qualitative analyses also show that immigrant youth from Mexican source were mobilized around issues of immigration reform, whereas youth from Asian genealogy were preoccupied with issues in their local communities. In a study on civic engagement and involvement in electronic social networks developments in Lithuania, Butkevičienė and Jurkevičienė (2018) discovered that there is a general favourable correlation between electronic social networks and participation in a range of civic activities. Additionally, they discovered that some networked behaviours have a greater impact on civic participation than others, such as offering topics for discussion, contributing to organized events, and publication of content. Thus, it makes sense to research the elements that encourage youth civic engagement in Nigeria, a sizable nation with three main ethnic groups and more than 250 minor ethnic groups. Despite being merged in 1914, her uniqueness and heterogeneity allowed her to continue evolving, but not in the way that was anticipated. More than 60% of the population is young, and they have given up on the nation due to banditry, abduction, Boko Haram terrorism, and other societal vices. A glimmer of optimism can be found in the recently held general election of 2023, which saw a large number of young people becoming involved in national politics. Numerous causes could have contributed to this, but it is important to examine the roles played by the Catholic Church's Justice Development and Peace Movement (JDPM).

In terms of issues pertaining to human rights, political engagement, human dignity, monitoring democracy and national budget, community outreach, alternative dispute resolution and free legal assistance, entrepreneur development and microcredit program, sustainable agriculture and rural development, youth development and formation, and conflict resolution management, to name a few, the Catholic Church has been leading the way in empowering people and reorienting them. In response to the Second Vatican Council's (1962-1965) call for the Church to get involved in constructing a just and peaceful society, JDPM or JDPC was established. The Justice Development and Peace Movement (JDPM), also known as the Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC), is a group that works with several archdioceses and dioceses in Nigeria to provide services to the general public, regardless of their gender, colour, ethnicity, or creed, promoting inclusivity. This non-governmental, faith-based organization works to promote social justice, democracy, human rights, culture, and dignity in society. It also collaborates and networks with other local, national, and international development organizations. Lastly, it believes in empowering the underprivileged, the weak, and the minority to take an active role in their own development and well-being. Its work is too important to overlook. Investigating these activities is worthwhile. The Church's position or the position people occupy in the churches impact in promoting citizenship among youths, especially in leadership training and responsibility, and participation in justice activities. It has also been a force to reckon with on intercultural education. This has been done through the promotion of curricula that include global citizenship, cultural literacy, and social justice, as well as maintaining inclusive classroom environments that respect different ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds. The church doesn't discriminate. She also engages in interreligious dialogue, particularly in multicultural or multi-faith contexts. For instance, in Nigeria, John Cardinal Onaiyekan and Bishop Hassan

Kukah have been powerful voices in this regard. The church, through the supreme pontiff, has welcomed multicultural education by accepting students from different cultures and orientations, especially immigrant populations. Pope John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis have advocated and worked towards intercultural and interreligious education with a view to engendering peace and justice.

Today, young people who hold positions of leadership being youth ministers or organizers of church groups, are entitled to plan community outreaches, charitable activities, and civic debates, thereby being responsible for various activities. Participation in the life of a religious community and engagement in politics is a well-debated discourse. Religious institutions can shape political attitudes, mobilize collective action, and provide moral frameworks that influence civic behaviour. Participation in religious communities can significantly influence political life, enhancing civic skills and promoting activism, especially when religious teachings align with democratic ideals. One of the agents of socialization that promote civic participation or engagement is the church. They provide networks, organizational skills, and moral narratives that align with political action. Verba, Scholzman, and Brady (1995) posited that religious congregations function as webs of democracy where individuals learn leadership and communication skills transferable to the political sphere. Constant participation in religious services often increases political awareness and voter turnout, particularly in democratic societies where civil liberties allow religious-political interaction (Putnam and Campbell, 2010). Moreover, these communities frequently mobilize members around moral or social justice issues, such as poverty, education, or immigration, thereby enhancing political consciousness. Religious leaders can function as opinion leaders who guide political discourse within their communities (Djupe and Gilbert, 2009).

The relationship between religion and politics is not one-way traffic, as it varies depending on religious tradition, denomination, and doctrine. For instance, the Evangelical Christians in the United States are often highly politically active, particularly around socially conservative issues (Wilcox and Robinson, 2010). On the flip side, mainline Protestant and Catholic groups may emphasize broader social justice issues, affecting their political engagement differently. Minority Christian groups may experience marginalization, which can both inhibit and galvanize political activism, but increased Islamophobia in Western contexts has led to greater political mobilization among Muslim communities as a form of resistance and self-advocacy (Jamal, 2005). Notwithstanding, the relationship is not without tension. Religious doctrines can conflict with secular democratic values, particularly regarding pluralism, gender equality, or LGBTQ+ rights. When religious ideologies dominate political discourse, they can undermine inclusive policymaking and marginalize minority voices (Habermas, 2006). Theocratic tendencies or the politicization of religion may erode the neutrality of public institutions and exacerbate societal polarization. Moreover, some religious communities emphasize withdrawal from secular politics, advocating spiritual purity over worldly engagement. This can lead to political apathy or resistance to democratic participation, particularly in sectarian or highly insular groups (Smith, 1996). Yuen and Leung (2021) underline the features of community development (CD) roles in offering possibilities for youth engagement for social justice in communities. These roles enable youths to take part in leadership, planning, as well as mobilizing other youths for issue-based causes. According to Schwadel (2016), other roles that enhance youths' civic engagement assist in developing the young people into coming up with a liberation psychology where they are able to challenge different forms of oppression and actively participate in the process

of liberation. Furthermore, Martini *et al.* (2023) explain how education and leadership that happens in church prepare the youths to be responsible citizens and social justice advocates for the betterment of the community. In this respect, the church leadership designations enable the youth to be involved in positions that have responsibilities of relating faith to citizenship, hence fostering the formation of skills and character traits that are necessary to deliver effective citizenship. By evaluating the functions of JDPM in encouraging civic engagement among Nigerian youth, this study sought to close the gap between the many programs and activities in the country and the scant research on the subject. Okunloye (2017) in his study also advanced non-formal political education agencies and platforms as well as content for addressing the rising trend of political apathy and irrational voting behaviour among Nigerian voters. This was the only Nigeria literature found on the topic under discourse. He, however, proposed non-formal packages which this study also aimed to examine JDPM as one of the non-formal ways of promoting civic participation, the efforts of the church through her agency.

Objectives

The general objective of this research is to assess the roles of justice development and peace development movement in promoting civic participation among youths. The specific purposes are to evaluate the roles of JDPM in promoting civic participation among youths in general, on the basis of church designation and on the basis of diocese.

Research Questions

1. What are the roles of JDPM in promoting civic participation among youths?
2. Would there be any significant variance in the evaluation of JDPM in promoting civic participation among youths on the basis of church designation?
3. Would there be any significant variance in the evaluation of JDPM in promoting civic participation among youths on the basis of diocese?

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant variance in the evaluation of JDPM in promoting civic participation among youths on the basis of church designation.

H₀₂: There is no significant variance in the evaluation of JDPM in promoting civic participation among youths on the basis of diocese.

Method

The study adopted descriptive survey research method. Quantitative data were used in the analysis of this study. The population for the study was all Catholics in the province of Ibadan See comprising Dioceses of Oyo, Ibadan, Ilorin, Ekiti and Ondo. The target population for the study is Catholics who belong to the Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria, priests and religious. Two dioceses – Oyo and Ilorin – were selected using the random sampling technique for the study. 51 participants took part in the study willingly and they were selected through random sampling. The choice of Catholic youths was deemed fit because they are

the first beneficiary of any of Justice Development and Peace Movement Programme in Nigeria before extension to non-Catholics. The instrument for the study was a researcher-designed questionnaire titled *Stakeholders assessment of the roles of justice development and peace movement in promoting civic participation among youths*. The instrument comprises demographic information on respondents and a 4 point-Likert scale response item which revolves around civic participation. The instrument was administered online through Google Form and was validated by two experts in social studies education and educational research, measurement and evaluation. Their corrections were used for the final draft. Test-retest method of reliability was used and the test was done at an interval of two weeks. Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistic was used to analyse the two scores and it yielded 0.76. Mean rating was used to answer the research question raised while t-test was used to test the formulated hypotheses.

3. Results

To provide an answer to the first research question, responses on the roles of JDPM in promoting civic participation among youths were evaluated based on mean analysis. Decision as to the roles of JDPM in promoting civic participation among youths was based on the benchmark of 2.50. This was achieved by finding the average of the numerical points for the responses as $(4+3+2+1)/4$. In which 4 represented *strongly agreed*, 3 represents *agreed*, 2 represents *disagree*, and 1 for *strongly disagree*. The result is presented in Table 1.

S/N	Role of JDPM in promoting civic participation	Mean	Ranking
1	JDPM is instrumental in teaching civility in society.	3.57	2 nd
2	JDPM is at the forefront of the campaign against political apathy, vote buying and selling.	3.59	1 st
3	JDPM performs advocacy for citizenship education through jingles and sensitization	3.33	5 th
4	I hold the belief that my vote doesn't count before being educated through the JDPM webinar	3.04	10 th
5	JDPM programmes have encouraged me to register for my permanent voter's card (PVC)	3.37	4 th
6	I got involved in political party meetings of my community as a result of JDPM education	2.90	11 th
7	JDPM election monitoring mechanism and situation room motivated me to come out on the election day	3.08	9 th
8	I did not buy or sell votes because I was educated through JDPM's awareness and sensitization	3.25	7 th
9	JDPM programmes dwell so much on inclusive political participation for the youths with disability	3.29	6 th
10	The Catholic Church through JDPM helps youth avoid being disenfranchised by accepting registration of voters at their sites	3.25	7 th
11	The efforts of JDPM in making us understand our political rights and responsibilities are significant	3.53	3 rd

Table 1: Rank ordering of the roles of JDPM in promoting civic participation among youths.

Key: Not a role of JDPM = 0.01 – 2.99; Role of JDPM = 3.00 – 5.00

Items with mean score of 2.50 and above were regarded as the roles of JDPM in promoting civic participation among youths, while items with mean score below 3.0 were not among the roles of JDPM in promoting civic participation among youths. Results in Table 2 show the roles of JDPM in promoting civic participation among youths. As shown in the table, in the order of ranking, the roles of JDPM in promoting civic participation among youths are campaigning against political apathy, vote buying and selling, teaching civility in society, making people understand their political rights and responsibilities, encouraging people to register for permanent voter's card (PVC), performing advocacy for citizenship education through jingles and sensitization, performing programmes dwell so much on inclusive political participation for the youths with a disability, helping youth avoid being disenfranchised by accepting registration of voters at their sites, motivating people to come out on the election day, making people aware that their votes count, and involving in political party meetings of one's own community as a result of JDPM education. According to hypothesis 1, there is no significant variance in the assessment of JDPM in promoting civic participation among youths on the basis of church designation.

Designation	No	Mean	Std.	t-value	Df	p-value	Remark
Youth	48	36.06	4.94	ii			
				0.89	49	0.38	Not Significant
Priest	3	38.67	4.51				

Table 2: Summary of t-test analysis on variance in the assessment of JDPM in promoting civic participation among youths on the basis of church designation.

Results in Table 2 showed a t-value of 0.89 and p-value of 0.38 in which the p-value is greater than 0.05 ($0.38 > 0.05$). Since 0.38 is greater than 0.05 alpha level of significance, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no variance in the assessment of JDPM in promoting civic participation among youths on the basis of church designation. According to hypothesis 2, there is no significant variance in the assessment of JDPM in promoting civic participation among youths on the basis of diocese.

Diocese	No	Mean	Std.	t-value	Df	p-value	Remark
Oyo	21	37.00	4.44				
				0.95	49	0.38	Not Significant
Ilorin	30	35.67	5.22				

Table 3: Summary of t-test analysis on variance in the assessment of JDPM in promoting civic participation among youths on the basis of diocese.

Table 3 above showed a t-value of 0.95 and p-value of 0.38 in which the p-value is greater than 0.05 ($0.38 > 0.05$). Since 0.38 is greater than 0.05 alpha level of significance, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there is no variance in the assessment of JDPM in promoting civic participation among youths on the basis of diocese.

4. Discussion, conclusion and recommendations

The study established that the JDPM plays several roles in electoral democracy in enhancing youths' understanding on the subject matter and their participation in the civil space. Some of them include organisation and mobilisation against political alienation and vote buying, education on civility, voters' registration, voting the right way, advocacy for political integration, and voting. This means that JDPM plays a huge role in strengthening political awareness and enhancing proper political participation of youths so that they can be in a better position to understand and exercise their roles. This result is possible if only the civic education initiation is developed socially and made transformative. The above conclusion supports Sutton (2023) who emphasizes on justice in youths empowering and for the development of the community through engagement. Perhaps this result will go against research that takes the involvement of citizens in the civic affairs as a mere obligation, not as an opportunity to gain more experience and knowledge (Watts and Flanagan, 2007).

This study findings suggest that there is no difference in the perceived role of JDPM in fostering Youth civic participation irrespective of the Church affiliation. This implies that no matter the office or the post that youths occupy namely in the church, the commitment towards the civic activities spearheaded by JDPM continues intact. It means that youths as either church ministers or organizers or occupying any other positions feel the same positive impact of JDPM in enhancing civil participation. This result is made achievable where the Church has an open leadership whereby all the youths, regardless of the positions they hold in the Church, are enthused to actively engage in civics like registering to vote, learning about politics, and engaging in any social justice activities. This finding supports the view of Yuen and Leung (2021) who highlighted that involvement of youths in social justice programs among the structures of churches do not discriminate youths based on their roles. This is in concordance with Martini *et al.* (2023) who pointed out that church-based educations and leadership trainings enable youths for active citizenship. However, this finding goes against Schwadel's (2016) argument that the sampled Church leadership responsibilities can enhance youths' civic participation through assumptions of more responsibilities and more opportunities of activism. Schwadel's view implies people in leadership positions are more likely to register for censuses, thus resulting to higher levels of civic engagement as opposed to this research.

On this note, this study established that there is no significant difference in how JDPM supports and encourages youths to participate in civil processes across the different dioceses. This implies that the level of how JDPM has impacted the civic participation of youths according to the diocesan perception is centralised, meaning that the objectives and strategies set for the movement are standard. Lack of variation further confirms what is already clear: JDPM does foster civil participation, peace and justice within and across geographical and organizational frames of the Church's diocesan bodies. This is perhaps achievable when the JDPM national or regional directives are harmonized regionally or nationally ensuring that youths in different regions are imparted similar education, trained or given similar responsibilities. This finding supports the study done by Martini *et al.* (2023), where the authors emphasized on the education-based projects dealing with social justice perspective to increase the youth engagement across populations in an equal manner. Furthermore, Lardier *et al.* 2020 also stressed on the need of long-term community intervention programs in shaping social participation among minority groups, providing supporting evidence for the

study that JDPM has a uniform impact. But this discovery negates Pospieszna and Galus' (2020) assertion that regional and contextual factors may cause differences in citizens' engagement, especially where the rural and urban contexts are concerned. In this study, no such regional variations were identified indicating that strategies implemented by JDPM adequately closes such gaps.

Conclusively, the study reveals that through addressing critical vices mainly political apathy, vote buying, and electoral vouching, the JDPM helps the youths of Nigeria to vote. JDPM can therefore be considered as a pro-active organization that actively engages in the promotion of political rights through its campaigns, advocacy, and other programs that enhance voter registration, and electoral participation. Also, the work established that JDPM posited a similar positive effect on the civic engagement of youths across the different Church classification and dioceses showing that it cuts across the broad-Church membership immune to any organizational or geographic difference which the church presents. After the evaluation process and the results obtained, the study therefore recommended the following: Justice Development and Peace Development Movement should continue intensifying its efforts in the area of civic literacy and empowerment; government should collaborate with the agency of the Church to reach out to the greater part of the population; more capacity building workshops, advocacy and sensitization should be done in remote areas where formal education is merely striving or without formal education.

Notes

¹ Pontiff is the name used to describe the Pope.

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