Interpersonal Trust, Demographic Variables and Civic Engagement in an Urban South-South Nigerian Setting

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ABSTRACT

Aim/Background: Civic Engagement (CE), that is expected to enhance collective moral behavior, is seriously lacking in the society, and empirical investigation into the psychosocial underpinnings of civic engagement is very scanty in Nigeria. The aim of this study is to examine civic engagement (attitudes and behavior's) in an urban Nigerian population and to determine the roles of interpersonal trust and socio-demographic variables. **Materials and Methods:** In this cross-sectional survey, 250 purposively selected urban dwellers completed the survey materials consisting measures of interpersonal trust, civic engagement attitudes and civic engagement behavior as well as a socio-demographic prototype. Of the 250 participants, 118 were males and 132 were females. Participants' ages ranged from 19 – 63 years, with the mean age of 36.3. **Result:** Mean scores on both civic engagement attitudes and civic engagement behavior's (19.66 and 20.66 respectively) were relatively low. Although all the variables jointly predicted civic engagement attitudes and behavior's, demographic variables were not good independent predictors of civic engagement. Interpersonal trust, however, was a good independent predictor of civic engagement. **Conclusion:** These findings suggest that explanation for civic engagement can be better situated in the psychological domain. Psychologists, political scientists and other stakeholders should get more actively involved in civic engagement by way of research, policy recommendation and advocacy aimed at enhancing civic engagement among members of the public.

INTRODUCTION

CE is a term that explains the process whereby citizens participate in the governing process of their political community or nation. Also known as civic participation, it has been defined as "Individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern" (Wikipedia, 2014). In their definition of CE, Adler & Goggin (2011) say; civic engagement refers to the ways in which citizens participate in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future.

CE means, "working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference" (Uzochukwu & Ekwugha, 2016, p. 206). It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes. A morally and civically responsible individual recognizes himself or herself as a member of a larger social fabric and therefore considers social problems to be at least partly his or her own; such an individual is willing to see the moral and civic dimensions of issues, to make and justify informed moral and civic judgments, and to take action when appropriate. CE can take many forms, ranging from individual volunteerism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. It can include efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community to solve a problem or interact with the institutions of representative democracy (Joakim & Erik, 2012). It is the sense of personal responsibility individuals feel to uphold their obligations, as part of any community. Above all these, CE and other related activities such as voting, working with fellow citizens to solve community problems, attending political meetings, taking part in a civic or political group, attending a political rally or speech, working or volunteering for a political party or candidate, making political contributions, or getting in touch with public officials is declining in our society.

The Psychology of CE is about people's connections with their communities, and the profound impact these connections can have on their health and well-being. Being active in a neighborhood association, volunteering with a charitable organization, working for a political party, fighting for social justice on behalf of a marginalized group, or even singing in a community choir all have positive outcomes. Unfortunately, however, there are many, particularly among those who are poor homes, extended family background, powerless or marginalized, who are not involved in their communities, and who don't get a chance to realize these benefits. Robert Putnam's work, for instance, indicated that American states

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with greater CE and more community organizations are "healthier" states, in that they have fewer rates of violent crimes, better educational achievement and fewer health problems compared to states with less civic participation and fewer opportunities for CE (Putnam, 2000).

The Integrated theory of CE posits that while initiating factors are sufficient to get people civically involved initially, other factors are important in determining whether that civic involvement will be sustained. Riedel *et al*. (2017), in an exposition of cognitive-motivational determinants of residents' CE and health (inequities), integrated arguments from the model on household's vulnerability to the local environment, the learned helplessness model in environmental psychology, the cognitive activation theory of stress, and the reserve capacity model to provide a robust explanation of civic engagement determinants. Pancer (2015) indicated that CE will continue to the extent that sustaining factors are present and that these sustaining factors outweigh any inhibiting factors that may also be present. The key factors that sustain civic engagement are positive experiences and a supportive social milieu. For instance, if a person feels that he or she is making a difference in the lives of others through voluntary work (positive experience) and is appreciated by the organization in which he works (which provides a supportive social milieu), he/she is likely to continue volunteering. Indeed, the feeling of having "made a difference" in people's lives is one of the most common and powerful experiences that people have reported about their civic engagement activities.

If, however, individuals have predominantly negative experiences and do not feel supported in their civic engagements, they are not likely to continue. In addition, the costs of engagement may also inhibit sustained involvement. One outstanding costs of engagement is the amount of time and efforts it entails. It is through sustained involvement that individuals who are civically engaged will experience an outcome related to their engagement. The extent and kind of these outcomes will depend on the nature of the involvements. For instance, studies have indicated that young people who are broadly involved in a wide variety of activities will experience more positive outcomes than those who are involved more intensely in relatively few activities (Busseri et al**.** 2006). Studies on the impacts of civic engagements suggest that the outcomes associated with civic engagement are mostly positive. People (especially young people) who are civically engaged demonstrated higher levels of

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well-being, more advanced identity development, fewer social and emotional problems and a greater sense of social responsibility, among many outcome (Pancer, 2015).

CE can also be seen on a system level. Research indicated that social systems like the family, communities and societies in which people work, live, learn and pray together have a great influence on CE. The process through which initiating and sustaining or inhibitory factors lead to CE and outcomes at the systems level is parallel to that which occurs at individual level. Factors that initiate CEs at a system level may include the presence of community organizations and leaders within those organizations who can recruit members and mentor those who participate. The more of these "opportunity structures" there are within a social system such as schools and neighborhood, the greater the number of individuals in those systems who will begin to be involved (Watt & Flanagan, 2007). Other systems-initiating factors will include the presence of programs that encourage civic engagements, such as service learning programs in the schools or employee volunteer programs in business and corporations.

In social learning theory, Bandura (1977) agrees with the behaviorist learning theories of classical conditioning and operant conditioning. However, he adds two important ideas: first, that mediating processes occur between stimuli and responses; and, second, that behavior is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning. Children observe the people around them behaving in various ways. This is illustrated during the famous Bobo doll experiment (Bandura, 1986). Individuals that are observed are called models. In society, children are surrounded by many influential models, such as parents within the family, characters on children's TV, friends within their peer group and teachers at school. These models provide examples of behavior to observe and imitate, including pro and anti-social. This is particularly the case among children who grew up in nuclear family settings because they are more likely to identify with and focus on fewer models, unlike in extended family settings where it may be difficult to identify with a focused model due to existence of many potential models. A number of studies (e.g. Abbasi et al, 2015; Brehn & Rahn, 1997; Fukuyama, 2005; Scheufele & Shah, 2000; Uslaner, 2002) reported significant influence of family types on engagement in civic.

Children pay attention to some of these people (models) and encode their behavior (such as volunteerism). At a later time they may imitate (i.e. copy) the behavior they have observed. They may do this regardless of whether the behavior is 'gender appropriate' or not, but there

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are a number of processes that make it more likely that a child will reproduce the behavior that its society deems appropriate for its sex. First, the child is more likely to attend to and imitate those people it perceives as similar to itself. Consequently, it is more likely to imitate behavior modeled by people of the same sex. Second, the people around the child will respond to the behavior it imitates with either reinforcement or punishment. If a child imitates a model's behavior and the consequences are rewarding, the child is likely to continue performing the behavior. If parent sees a little girl consoling her teddy bear and says "what a kind girl you are", this is rewarding for the child and makes it more likely that she will repeat the behavior. Her behavior has been reinforced (i.e. strengthened). Reinforcement can be external or internal and can be positive or negative. If a child wants approval from parents or peers, this approval is an external reinforcement, but feeling happy about being approved of is an internal reinforcement. A child will behave in a way which it believes will earn approval because it desires approval. Positive (or negative) reinforcement will have little impact if the reinforcement offered externally does not match with an individual's needs. Reinforcement can be positive or negative, but the important factor is that it will usually lead to a change in a person's behavior.

Third, the child will also take into account of what happens to other people when deciding whether or not to copy someone's actions. A person learns by observing the consequences of another person's (i.e. models) behavior e.g. a younger sister observing an older sister being rewarded for a particular behavior is more likely to repeat that behavior herself. This is known as vicarious reinforcement. That is why it is possible for people to engage more in civic activities in societies where CEs are rewarded. This relates to attachment to specific models that possess qualities seen as rewarding. Children will have a number of models with whom they identify. These may be people in their immediate world, such as parents or older siblings, or could be fantasy characters or people in the media. The motivation to identify with a particular model is that they have a quality which the individual would like to possess.

Identification occurs with another person (the model) and involves taking on (or adopting) observed behaviors, values, beliefs and attitudes of the person with whom you are identifying. The term identification as used by social learning theory is similar to the Freudian term related to the Oedipus complex. For example, they both involve internalizing or adopting another person's behavior. However, during the Oedipus complex, the child can only identify with the same sex parent, whereas with social learning theory the person (child

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or adult) can potentially identify with any other person. Identification is different to imitation as it may involve a number of behaviors being adopted, whereas imitation usually involves copying a single behavior.

The various environments ranging from family type to where individuals live, learn, play, pray and work affect their community involvements. Family environments, as one might expect, have a profound influence on the civic engagement of children. Parents influence their children's civic activities by encouraging their children's involvement, by serving as role models of engagement, by transmitting their values through discussion with their children, and by linking them to community organizations. Studies show, for example, that children whose families discuss politics in the home are two to three times more likely to follow politics, sign petitions, and volunteer when they became adults, compared to children whose parents didn't discuss politics (Pancer, 2015). School and neighbourhood environments have a similarly profound influence on young people's civic participation. Children who attend schools that provide opportunities for students to do community service, encourage respect among students and teachers, and offer a wide range of extracurricular activities, are much more likely to become active citizens when they reach adulthood (Putnam, 2000).

From social scientific perspective, civic engagement is a complex behavior that is influenced by many factors, including the person's family, gender, ethnic and cultural background, trust, socioeconomic status, group memberships and personal values Research in political psychology shows that negative advertising increases citizen lack of trust in government and it damages people inclination to go and vote (Pancer, 2015). Interestingly, it also indicates that negative adverts tend to tarnish the image not only of the victims of the attacks but of the perpetrators of the attack as well (Pancer & Landau, 2009). Civic engagement activities (such as voluntary associations) are the backbone of civil society. Participation in voluntary associations is often believed to make citizens more trusting of others.

Researchers have attempted to situate the explanation for civic engagement within the psychological domain (e.g. Sargsyan, 2016). In Armenia, Sargsyan (2016) mentioned psychological factors, especially personality and traits characterized by being outgoing, open and extroverted are more civically active than introverted individuals, findings that are consistent with previous empirical evidence (e.g. Kavanaugh et al 2005; Keller &Berry 2003). Similarly, happier and more trusting people get more engaged in civic life than those

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who are unhappy, sceptical and, in general, distrustful to their fellow citizens or the government. It has been established, that people who have larger networks or 'ties' are civically more active than those with a smaller network of friends or relatives (Putnam, 2000).

Interpersonal trust can lead to people engaging in civic activities such as voting in elections and volunteering. When people get together, organize group activities, collaborate to achieve collective goals endorsed by fellow group members and share their experiences, they create a sense of community for themselves and for others. People enjoy being a part of groups in which people work together and they will reciprocate with their behaviours. In these groups, members will develop a positive relation with each other and positive beliefs about the intentions and attitudes of their fellows. What could be a more natural product of such voluntary actions than trust in others? Putnam (2000) opines, and rightly so, there is close connection between interpersonal trust and civic engagement. Putnam (2000) further stressed that interpersonal trust is positively associated with activism, volunteering and other forms of civic behaviours.

Certain demographic variables can play important roles in civic engagement. Age should be positively associated with civic engagement because people are expected to become increasingly "others-centered" as they grow older. Education is expected to manifest a positive relationship with civic engagement, because education provides citizens with the skills required to engage in civic life, such as letter writing and organizing events as well as socializing people to value civic participation for its own sake (Norris, 1996; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993; Verba & Nie, 1972). The role of income is not as straight-forward. People with greater disposable incomes may have greater resources, but they also may have more demands on their time. As a result, there may not be a significant relationship between income and civic engagement. However, the relationship between income and civic engagement should be positive, because greater income should reduce beliefs that others are working against one's interests, leading to more affirmative evaluations of the integrity of most people (Fukuyama, 1995; Uslaner, 1998), and consequently, greater likelihood of engaging in "others-centered" endeavours. Also, the hardships associated with low incomes may be contrary to the supportive environment necessary for nurturing civic attitudes and behaviours (Brehm & Rahn, 1997).

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In a study conducted in Pakistan to examine demographic determinants of civic participation, Abbasi et al. (2015) interviewed 528 individuals in three main Pakistani cities. Results of the cross-sectional study indicated that gender, age, education, income and family patterns had significant influence on civic participation. Specifically, males scored significantly higher on civic engagement than females (Abbasi et al. 2015). Individuals aged between 21 and 30 years, relative to people of other age brackets, scored significantly lower on civic engagement. Furthermore, individuals from nuclear family reported significantly lower on civic engagement than those from extended family settings (Abbasi et al. 2015). Siemienska (2015) similarly observed that young individuals tend to be less civically involved compared to older people. Sargsyan (2016), however, reported that younger people were more civically engaged across Armenian communities. According to Sargsyan (2016), "students and young people who did not have full-time jobs had more free time to contribute to solution of community issues, participation in meetings and seminars, and volunteering to help their neighbours or fix a common problem in the community" (p. 185). Sargsyan (2016) further identified education and civic awareness as potential determinants of civic engagement, opining that residents who were more knowledgeable about the legal framework or had information on various development opportunities for the village/town appeared to be more actively involved in rising in addressing community issues. They also appeared eager to share their knowledge with the community.

Results of studies on the relationship between trust and measures of civic engagement of individuals are scanty, mixed, equivocal and weak at best (Abbasi et al., 2015; Brehm & Rahn 1997; Dekker 2003; Delhey & Newton, 2003; Putnam, 2000; Scheufele & Shah, 2000; Uslaner 2002), especially in Nigeria (e.g. Ahmadu et al. 2016, Opeibi, 2012; Uzochukwu & Ekwugha, 2014). Results of studies on socio-demographic correlates of civic engagement are equally mixed and equivocal (Norris, 1996; Putnam, 1995; Putnam & Yonish, 1997; Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Sangsyan, 2016; Uslaner, 1998).

As noted by several researchers, representative democracy can only work when citizens are well informed, actively engaged in voting and other civic activity, and equipped with the skills of advocacy, debate, compromise, and leadership (Abbasi et al., 2015; Opeibi, 2012; Siemienska, 2015; Ugochukwu & ekwugha, 2014). Yet, voting and many other forms of civic engagement are in decline in Nigeria today. Unfortunately, civic engagement that is expected to enhance collective moral behaviour, is seriously lacking in the society. The

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modern society has become too individualistic, too self-centered and too unconcerned to show sympathies and respect as would have been most expedient. More worrisome is the dearth of empirical literature on civic engagement and factors that affect it Reversing the forces of incivility, misinformation, and the active marketing of cynicism will require concerted, collective efforts. A very important step in this direction is to explore the psychosocial underpinning of civic engagement with a view to using findings of such studies to initiate or shape relevant policies and advocacy towards getting people to be more civically-engaged. There is a need, therefore, to empirically explore the very important issue of civic engagement in Nigeria and examine some of its correlates.

Aim of Study

Since governments do not have the resources or capacity to address all of the economic, political and social gaps that exist, it is crucial that private citizens engage in the process of enhancing the well-being of societies. Civic engagement is one way citizens can help shape the collective future of human communities both on a local or global scale. There is a serious dearth of empirical studies in the social-scientific literature that address civic engagement and its psychosocial underpinnings. The present study is, therefore, aimed at examining the extent of civic engagement among swellers in a Nigerian urban setting. The study is also aimed at gauging the role of interpersonal trust in predicting individual's civic engagement as well as investigating the influence of family setting in predicting civic engagement. Additionally, the study will further determine whether job type (private versus public), sex and age will influence individuals' civic engagement. The present study will, therefore, be guided by the following research questions: What is the level of civic engagement among workers in a Nigerian urban setting? To what extent will family setting, sex, age and job type influence or predict civic engagement? To what extent will interpersonal trust influence civic engagement of individuals? Specifically, we hypothesized that civic engagement tendency will be low among the study's participants and that interpersonal trust, family setting, job type, age and sex will be significantly and positively associated with civic engagement.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants and Setting

Two hundred and fifty purposively selected workers participated in this cross-sectional survey. Participants consisted of workers drawn from both private and public settings within

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Uyo metropolis in Akwa Ibom State. Uyo is the state capital of Akwa Ibom State, an oil-producing state in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The city became the capital of the state on September 23, 1987, following the creation of Akwa Ibom State from erstwhile Cross River State. The population of Uyo, according to the 2013 projected population figures 385,643 (Government of Akwa Ibom State, 2014). Akwa Ibom, a state of about 5.3 million people (Government of Akwa Ibom State, 2014), is located in the coastal southern part of the country, lying between latitudes 4°32′N and 5°33′N, and longitudes 7°25′E and 8°25′E. The state is located in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria and is bordered on the east by Cross River State, on the west by Rivers State and Abia State, and on the south by the Atlantic Ocean and the southernmost tip of Cross River State. In addition to English, the main spoken languages are Ibibio, Annag, Eket and Oron. The Akwa Ibom state government house is located at Wellington bassey in Uyo.

Of the 250 participants, 118 were males and 132 were females. Participants' ages ranged from 19 – 63 years, with the mean age of 36.3. Data was collected at the Akwa Ibom State secretariat (Idongesit Nkanga Secretariat), University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Commercial Banks and other private organizations within Uyo metropolis.

Measures

A three-sectioned questionnaire was used to collect relevant data. The first section of the questionnaire assessed socio-demographic variables such as age, sex, job type, family setting. Age was measured in terms of participants' actual ages in years, as at their last birthdays. Participants indicated whether they were males or females. Job type was assessed by asking participants to indicate their specific job and the names of their organizations. Family setting was measured in terms of whether participants resided in a nuclear or extended family setting.

Civic Engagement was assessed using the 16-item Civic Engagement scale developed by Doolittle and Paul (2013). The scale has two dimensions: civic engagement attitudes and civic engagement behaviours. The attitudes dimension consists of 8 Likert-formatted items, scored along a scale of 7 points ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" and with higher scores denoting higher civic engagement attitudes. The behavioural dimension, on the other hands, consists of 6 Likert-formatted items, scored along a scale of 7 points ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" and with higher scores

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denoting higher civic engagement behaviours. A reliability coefficient (alpha) of 0.73 was obtained during the pilot study while 0.83 was obtained for the entire scale in the substantive study.

Interpersonal Trust was assessed using the Interpersonal Scale developed by Rotter (1967). The 25-item instrument is scored along a five-point Likert format with scores ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" and with higher scores indicating greater interpersonal trust. From the pilot study, a reliability coefficient (alpha) of .74 was obtained while 0.70 was obtained in the substantive study. The scale has been used and has undergone revisions and revalidation, with empirical support for its psychometric robustness (e.g. Carrington, 2007; Taormina, 2013; Yamagishi, 2011).

Procedure

A pilot study was conducted to, among other things, re-validate the instruments being used for data collection. Questionnaires were personally administered to 49 workers, made up of 24 males and 25 females drawn from both private and public settings in Ikot Ekpene Urban, Ikot Ekpene Local government area of Akwa Ibom state. Analysis, using the 20th version of the SPSS, indicated that the instruments remained psychometrically robust. In the substantive study, Data was also personally collected by the researchers, using purposive sampling technique. Respondents were approached in their offices and after due approval had been sought and obtained. Informed consent was implied by participants' agreement to participate and subsequent voluntary completion of the study questionnaire. Each respondent took an average of 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Of the 300 questionnaires administered over a three-week data collection period, 250 were returned with usable data, indicating an 83.3% return rate.

RESULTS

Participants' background information and summary scores on interpersonal trust, civic engagement attitudes and civic engagement behavior are presented in Table 1. The range for civic engagement attitude and civic engagement behaviours was 8 to 56. Mean scores on both civic engagement attitudes and behaviours (19.66 and 20.66 respectively) were relatively low, indicating that civic engagement is low among this population.

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Table 1: Respondents' descriptive information

Variable	n	%	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Age			19.00	63.00	36.29	10.28
Sex						
Male	116	47.2				
Female	132	52.8				
Employment Type						
Private	120	48.0				
Public	130	52.0				
Family Setting						
Nuclear	113	45.2				
Extended	136	54.2				
Interpersonal Trust			25.00	101.00	62.56	11.43
Civic Engagement Attitude			8.00	56.00	19.66	6.73
Civic Engagement Behaviour			6.00	42.00	20.66	7.17

We performed a bivariate analysis to explore the relationship among study variables (Table 2). Results of the inter-correlational analyses indicated that only interpersonal trust is related to civic engagement attitudes (r = .33; p<.01) and civic engagement behaviours (r = .37; p<.01). age, sex, employment type and family settting are not related to civic engagement attitudes and behaviours. Expectedly, a very strong and positive relationship was found between civic engagement attitudes and civic engagement behaviours (r = .60; p<.01).

Table 2: Bivariate analysis showing inter-correlations among study variables.

Variable	Age	Sex	Empl. Type	Family Type	Civic Eng. Att.	Civic Eng. Beh.	Int. Trust
Age	1						
Sex	-.24[**]	1					
Empl. Type	.07	-.06	1				
Family Setting	.18[**]	-.09	.18[**]	1			
Civic Eng. Att.	-.01	.05	.11	.039	1		
Civic Eng. Beh.	-.08	.04	.04	-.087	.60[**]	1	
Int. Trust	-.03	.04	.078	-.120	.33[**]	.37[**]	1

We also performed two separate multiple regression analysis to determine how much of the variances in civic engagement behaviours and civic engagement attitudes would be explained by the predictor variables. A summary of the multiple regression is presented in Table 3.

Results indicated that although all the variables jointly predicted civic engagement attitudes (R = '35; F = 6.84; P < .01), jointly accounting for about 13% of the variances in civic engagement attitudes (R^2 = .13), demographic variables were not good independent predictors

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of civic engagement. Specifically, age (β = -.001; P > .05), sex (β = .047; P > .05), employment type (β = .075; P > .05) and family setting (β = .075; P > .05) did not significantly predict civic engagement attitudes. Interpersonal trust, however, was a good predictor of civic engagement attitudes ((β = .332; P < .01).

With regards to civic engagement behaviours, results indicated that all the variables jointly predicted civic engagement behaviours (R = .38; F = 8.69; P < .01), jointly accounting for about 15% of the variances in civic engagement behaviours (R^2 = .15). Interpersonal trust also independently predicted civic engagement behaviours (β = .332; P < .01). Demographic variables were, however, not good independent predictors of civic engagement: age (β = -.068; P > .05), sex (β = .002; P > .05), employment type (β = .022; P > .05) and family setting (β = -.035; P > .05) did not significantly predict civic engagement attitudes.

Table 3: Linear Multiple Regression of age, sex, employment type, family setting and interpersonal trust on civic engagement attitudes and behaviours

Variable	β	t	Sig.	R	R^2	F	Sig.
Civic Engagement Attitudes							
Age	-.001	-.015	.988				
Gender	.047	.758	.449				
Employment Type	.075	1.220	.224	.35	.13	6.84	.000
Family Setting	.070	1.128	.261				
Interpersonal Trust	.332	5.467	.000				
Civic Engagement Behaviours							
Age	-.068	-1.097	.274				
Gender	.002	.037	.971				
Employment Type	.022	.356	.722	.38	.15	8.27	.000
Family Setting	-.035	-.572	.568				
Interpersonal Trust	.364	6.071	.000				

DISCUSSION

We explored civic engagement (attitudes and behaviours) and some selected predictors of civic engagement among workers in an urban setting. As hypothesized, civic engagement was found to be quite low among this population. Although there is a dearth of empirical studies on this very important issue in Nigeria, the finding reinforces the observed trends in Nigerian societies in which people show little or no concern about the public welfare. The finding tends to demonstrate vividly the dangerous brands of individualistic and self-centered democracy that we practice in Nigeria. In the past, people used to behave communally,

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showing great concern for and actively participating in endeavours that were deemed communally beneficial. Unfortunately, it is not very common to see such behaviours on display anymore.

Findings of the present study indicated a very strong positive relationship between civic engagement attitudes and behaviours. Although the issue of attitude-behaviour consistency has generated ample controversy in the social psychological and social scientific literature, these results appear to be in agreement with the conclusions drawn by Zimbardo and Leippe (1991), who opine that the consistence of behaviours and attitudes is a given when: the attitude is strong and clear; the attitude relates to the behaviour which is required by a given situation; the attitude and behaviour are intimately connected with yet another element of the attitude system (be it cognitive, or emotional) – in this case, civic engagement; and, lastly, the attitude is important for a given person.

Consistent with empirical evidences that individuals with high interpersonal trust will report significant high on civic engagement (Pancer, 2015; Putnam, 2000; Sargsyan, 2016), findings of the present study also indicated that the higher the interpersonal trust of an individual, the higher his or her civic engagement attitudes and behaviours. Robert Putnam's work for instance indicated that American states with greater civic engagement and more community organizations are "healthier" state, in that they have fewer rates of violence crimes, better educational achievement and fewer health problems compare to state with less civic participation and fewer opportunities for civic engagement (Putnam, 2000). He went further to say that interpersonal trust is positively associated with activism, volunteering and other forms of civic behaviours. The finding also appears to reinforce Pancer (2015)'s assertion on the importance of interpersonal trust in civic engagement that lack of trust by citizens in their leaders is one of the reasons some countries have low turnout of voters during elections. It is therefore important to note that if citizen's interpersonal trust is high, civic activities will be enhanced.

None of the demographic variables (sex, age, employment type, family setting) had a significant influence on civic engagement. For instance, we found that family setting did not predict civic engagement. Although, empirical evidence on the roles of family setting in civic engagement have not been entirely unequivocal, findings of the present study tend to contrast with a number of studies from the developed countries (such as Abbasi et al., 2015; Brehn & Rahn, 1997; Fukuyama, 1995; Sargsyan, 2016; Scheufele & Shah, 2000; Uslaner, 2002) in

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which significant influence of family setting on civic engagement was found. Overall, all the predictor variables in the present study jointly explained a reasonably fair amount of the variances in civic engagement.

The implication of these findings is that civic engagement attitude and behavior are low among this population. Another implication of the findings is that a strong and positive relationship exists between civic engagement attitudes and civic engagement behaviours. Furthermore, the psychological variable in the study (interpersonal trust) provided the most scientifically-robust explanation of civic engagement. It could also be deduced that given the fact that interpersonal trust and the other predictor variables in this study only provided 13% and 15% of the variances in civic engagement attitudes and civic engagement behaviours respectively, other (probably more potent) explanations remain unexplored.

CONCLUSION

Given the importance of civic engagement in nation building and the finding that civic engagement is at a low ebb in Nigeria, we recommend advocacy by political scientists, psychologists and other social scientists, civil society organizations, electoral agencies, the mass media, educational institutions at all levels, and other stakeholders. Considering the role of interpersonal trust in civic engagement, there is a need to reduce the feelings of alienation and foster a sense of ownership of the society in individuals. When people feel that they are "co-owners" of their society, they will be more likely to engage civically as against when they feel alienated and politically disenchanted. The re-introduction, compulsorily, of civic education in the secondary school curriculum in Nigeria is a very good development. We recommend that the same should be done at the tertiary level of education. Additionally, since a strong and positive association between interpersonal trust and civic engagement was found, we recommend that activities aimed at engendering interpersonal trust should be put in place. Findings of the present study indicated that psychological variables (interpersonal trust) was more predictive of civic engagement that demographic variables. It is hereby recommended that further studies on this issue should incorporate other salient and empirically potent psychological variables so that larger variance of civic engagement could be explained. Other demographic variables (e.g. education, family history of civic engagement, residential factor, etc) should be incorporated as well.

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Finally, given the nature of this study (a cross-sectional survey) and the inevitable shortcomings of such studies, it is recommended that future studies should consider more controlled approaches in which participants would be randomly selected and extraneous variables would be properly controlled. It should also be mentioned that the study participants and their responses do not necessarily typify every public/private sector worker in Uyo, South-South Nigeria or Nigerians as a people. Caution must be adopted, therefore, while making inferences and generalizations about the findings of the study. Nevertheless, the various methodological limitations of the present study, important contribution has been made towards providing a better understanding of an hitherto under-researched issue of considerable public concern; and, in our own considered view, the identified limitations are not pervasive enough to vitiate the findings and conclusions of the study.

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