

Gender Differentials in Perception of Women Participation in Political and Community Development in Ogun East Senatorial District, Nigeria

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Abstract. This study investigated the differentials in perception of gender on women participation in politics and community development in Ogun East Senatorial District, Nigeria. A questionnaire tagged labelled “women participation in politics and community development questionnaire” was administered on one hundred and seventy-two (172) political and career office holders in the study area. Inferential statistical of t-test was used to analyse the data collected. Findings revealed that significant differences exist in the perception of male and female respondents as to the number of women voted into elective offices; the level of women participation in decision-making; and outcome of women appointed into political offices. On the basis of the findings, recommendations were made for greater involvement of women in politics and community development.

Keywords: Gender, women, participation, perception, community, development

1. Background to the Study

There has been growing interest internationally in the issue of women political participation and community development. Today more than ever before, women’s participation in the political and community development process has not only been recognized as issue of human rights, but also as a critical panacea to address the problem of gender inequality of society. From history, women and women’s organizations have significantly contributed significantly to the social development of human society in different spheres. Individually and collectively, women have been involved in economic, political, social and cultural processes.

In the field of social sciences, there are various definitions and debates of political participation by scholars. The aim is not to engage in this academic

debate of how narrow or broad political participation is or should be, rather just to give a simple contextual clarification. Thus, political participation deal with the various ways in which individuals get involve in the administration of the political affairs of his/her community. It is the active engagement by both women and men in political process that affect their lives. Active engagements mean exercising one’s civic rights to vote, stand for election into political office, join of political party, involve the political campaigns of the political parties, and to exert influence in the decision-making process at different levels of administrations- national, state and local (Huntington, Nelson & Harvard University, 1976;). Then women’s political participation is the equal involvement of women in the governance of the communities to which they belong either through election and appointment on merit. It is the opportunity and ability to participate at all stages, in all aspects of political life and decision making process equally with men. Community and by extension the country is better for it, if political participation and decision-making reflects the input from all members of the community without discrimination. Studies have revealed that women play a vital role in the community by taking care of all societal activities. And that increased women’s involvement in decision-making has resulted in a larger economic benefit, cooperation and more peaceful resolution of conflicts. It is thus imperative to raise women’s engagement in politics by sensitising them to available opportunities, skills and self-confidence development (Kassa 2015; Mutongu, 2012).

Nigeria, is the most populous country in sub-Saharan Africa and ranked 10th in the world with estimated population of 183 million of which, 90,989,254 (49.7%) are females and 92,387,474 (50.3%) are males (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The

Nigeria constitution like many of other countries in Section 15 which constitution recognises the principle of equality among its citizens and prohibits discrimination on the bases of ethnic origin, sex (gender), religion, or linguistic affiliation. Despite the numerical strength, and constitutional declaration, Nigerian women are under represented almost in all spheres of the country's economy such as politics, education, agriculture, and business enterprises. For instance, Nigerian women contribute close to 70 per cent of agricultural workforce yet get less of accruing returns. Only 24% women as against 76% men are in the federal civil service. Furthermore, less than 14% of the total management level positions are women, while

17.5% of those engaged in the medical professions are women compared with the 82.5% men (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012; 2016). There are as many as five times of judges and permanent secretaries are men than women. Men with dependent pay less tax than women with dependants. In the rural community, about 79 percent of the work force are women yet have limited access to land.

Since the return to democratic dispensation in 1999, concerted efforts have been made by women groups, women advocate and activities, civil society organizations, Nigerian government and international agencies and donor communities to increase women participation in politics and decision making to no avail (Egwu, 2015). Table 1 captures the percentages of representation of men and women from 1999 – 2015. House of Assembly, House of Representation, Senate and Deputy Governor Statistics revealed that in 2007 election, only 5.5% of the house of assembly members were women. Of the 990 candidates who contested elections for house of assembly election in 2015, 60 that is 6.1% merged elected as winners: six deputy governors, nine senators, 27 national representatives, and 55 in various state Houses of Assembly. There are 109 seats in the senate; only three females were elected to the upper house in 1999, 4 in 2003 and 9 in 2007 while 8 got elected in 2015. In the house of representative which was 360 seats. 13 women were there in 1999, 21 in 2003, and 25 in 2007. The 36 states House of Representative together have 990 seats; women got 12 in 1999, 38 in 2003, and 54 in 2007. Furthermore, from the statistics, it is evident that the country's politics is still largely dominated by men in elective offices. In 2015, the total registered voters was 68,833, 476, with men had 22, 944, 984 registered and women had 45, 888, 984 registered (www.inec.gov.ng, 2015). This simply implies that women have numerical strength but their numbers are irrelevant in governance. It

shows that they participate only in rallies, campaigns, and voters' registration, voting and contesting. Available statistics shows that over 49% of the voters' registration populations are women yet only 7% (INEC, 2011) are in governance. Nigeria women have the lowest representation of 5.9% in the National legislature when compared to most other Africa countries. In countries such as South Africa, Swaziland, Seychelles, Namibia and Mozambique, women hold one-third of parliamentary seats. In the last three decades, there has been increase in women legislators in Africa from 1% to 14.6% (Kassa 2015; Mutongu, 2012). In Nigeria, women have not been very successful in altering their political and economic space and have not been able to close the gap between them and their men counterpart in gaining access to political decision-making and participation. For example, Uganda has 34.6%, South Africa (43.2%), Ethiopia (27.7%) and Cameroun (20.1%) (Daily Times, May 18th 2012).

Literature evidence shows that women face several obstacles to participating in political life. The current under-representation of women in political position is the result of multiple factors. These factors are both structural and functional barriers which differ across countries and culture (Arqimandriti, & Llubani, 2015; Damilola, 2010). In their study Akinleke and Afolayan (2015) examine the effect of socio-cultural factors such as age, level of education, gender and electoral system on women participation in politics and reported that age, level of education, gender disparity and social prejudice all affect the women involvement in politics in Nigeria.

Studies of Kassa (2015) in Ethiopia also showed that different casual factors such as; economic, religious, social and cultural factors contributed to women's poor political participation in the country. The study further revealed that Ethiopian women lack access to political decision making when compared to their men counter parts at all levels of government. Hora (2014) observed that socio-cultural attitudes, lack of experience in public decision-making, lack of self confidence, fear of what others think of them, over burden of domestic responsibilities and lack of role models among women leaders are some of the major barriers hindering women from public leadership and decision-making positions.

Several studies show that a gender difference in political participation exists from an early age and across culture. For instance, Coffé and Bolzendahl (2010) using the 2004 ISSP data from 18 countries to investigate gender gaps in political participation. The study found that demographic and attitudinal

characteristics influence participation differently among men and among women, as well as across types of participation. Jenkins (2005) found modest gender differences in conventional political participation and greater differences with community service or voluntary commitments. The study reported that young men to be slightly more active.

There is dearth of research in Nigeria on the subject which is the deeply-rooted belief that women participation must be study within the historical, cultural, social and political contexts each region in the country. In order to improve women's political participation, we need to understand how members of the community especially in the political arena or actors view the role of women in politics and community development. Therefore, this study seeks to understand the differential perception of gender roles in political participation and community development in Ogun East Senatorial District, Ogun State with a view to understand. In view of the above therefore, the following six hypotheses were formulated:

H0₁. There is no significant difference between male and female respondents' perception of the number of women voted to elective political offices in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State.

H0₂. There is no significant difference between male and female respondents' perception of the degree of women participation in political and elective offices in Ogun East Senatorial district.

H0₃. There is no significant difference between male and female respondents' perception of the level of women participation in decision making process of Ogun East Senatorial district of Ogun State.

H0₄. There is no significant difference between male and female respondents' perception of the achievement of women appointed into political/elective offices in Ogun East senatorial zone.

H0₅. There is no significant difference between male and female respondents' perception of the influence of women in community development in Ogun East Senatorial District.

H0₆. There is no significant difference between male and female respondent' perception of the outcome of women appointed into any political administrative post in Ogun East senatorial district of Ogun State.

2. Method

This study is a quantitative study which employed the descriptive survey design. The population of the study were all the political office holders and career officers in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State. Ogun east is the largest senatorial district of the three in Ogun State in term of land space and population in the state. Ogun east is made up of nine local government areas. These are: Ijebu East, Ijebu North, Ijebu North East, Ijebu-Ode, Ikenne, Odogbolu, Ogun Waterside, Remo North and Sagamu Local Government Areas. The district is predominantly rural. It is a patriarchal society that keeps women in a subordinate position. Farming is the main occupation of men and women in this area

A sample of one hundred (100) political office holders and one hundred (100) career officers in Ogun East Senatorial district were randomly selected from five local government areas of nine local government areas in the district. Twenty political officers and twenty career officers were selected from each of the selected local government area. Of the total 200 questionnaires administered, 28 were returned incomplete and the 172 remaining questionnaires, (86%) were completed and used for the analysis.

The main instrument used for this study was questionnaire tagged Women Participation in Politics and Community Development Questionnaire (W.P.C.D.Q). The questionnaire was made up of three sections. Section A requires the respondent to provide demographic data information. Items include the sex, post or cadre, qualifications, and political district. Section B contains items that focus on the political and community participation in Ogun East Senatorial District with "Yes" and "No" options for the respondent. Section C contains thirty (30) items, which requires the respondents to give their opinion on participation in politics and community development. The section C of the questionnaire was designed, using the four-point Likert scale. To determine the reliability of the instrument, it was subjected to a test-retest of a two-week interval. A coefficient Alpha of .79 was obtained. Data collected were analysed using the independent t-test statistical technique.

3. Results

Results of data analyses are presented in Table 1 – 6 below.

The first hypothesis states that: There is no significant difference between male and female respondents’ perception of the number of women voted to elective political offices in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State.

Table 1: Test of significant difference between male and female respondents’ perception of the number of women elected to elective offices.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t cal	t critical
Male	90	83.14	1.78	170	738	1.96
Female	82	85.87	3.81			

P>.05

The results in Table 1 revealed that there is a significant different in male and female respondents’ perception of the number of men and women voted to elective political offices. The calculated t – value of 7.38 was found to be higher than the critical t – value of 1.96 at the .05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected by this finding.

The second hypothesis states that: There will be no significant difference between male and female respondents’ perception of the degree women participation in political and elective offices in Ogun East Senatorial district.

Table 2: Test of significant difference between male and female respondents’ perception of the degree of women participation in political and elective offices

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t cal	t critical
Male	90	84.22	1.78	117	1.92	1.96
Female	82	84.68	1.68			

The results in Table 2 revealed that there is a significant different in male and female respondents’ perception of the degree of women participation in political and elected offices. The calculated t – value of 1.92 was found to be lower than the critical t – value of 1.96 at the .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

The third hypothesis states that: There is no significant difference between male and female respondents’ perception of the level women participation in decision making process of Ogun East Senatorial district of Ogun State.

Table 3: Test of significant difference between male and female respondents’ perception of the level of women participation in decision-making process.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t cal	t critical
Male	90	84.07	0.18	170	3.55	1.96
Female	82	84.85	1.9			

P>.05

The results in Table 3 revealed that there is a significant different in male and female respondents’ perception of the level of women participation in decision-making process. The calculated t – value of 3.55 was found to be higher than the critical t – value of 1.96 at the .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected by this finding.

The fourth hypothesis states that: There is no significant difference between male and female respondents’ perception of the achievement of women appointed into political/elective offices in Ogun East senatorial zone.

Table 4: Test of significant difference between male and female respondents’ perception of the achievement of women appointed into political or elective offices

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t cal	t critical
Male	90	84.31	1.75	170	1.17	1.96
Female	82	84.59	1.77			

P<0.05

The results in Table 4 revealed that there is a significant different in male and female respondents’ perception of the achievement of women appointed into political/elective offices. The calculated t – value of 1.17 was found to be lower than the critical t – value of 1.96 at the .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

The fifth hypothesis states that: There is no significant difference between male and female respondents' perception of the influence of women in community development in Ogun East Senatorial District.

Table 5: Test of significant difference between male and female respondents' perception of the influence of women in community development.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t cal	t critical
Male	90	84.25	1.65	170	1.54	1.96
Female	82	84.65	1.9			

P> .05

The results in Table 5 revealed that there is a significant different in male and female respondents' perception of the influence of women on community development. The calculated t – value of 1.54 was found to be lower than the critical t – value of 1.96 at the .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

The sixth hypothesis states that: There is no significant difference between male and female respondents' perception of the outcome of women appointed into any political administrative post in Ogun East Senatorial District of Ogun State.

Table 6: Test of significant difference between male and female respondents' perception of the outcome of women appointed into political administrative posts.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t cal	t critical
Male	90	84.09	1.66	170	2.96	1.96
Female	82	84.83	1.83			

P>.05

The results in Table 6 indicated that there is a significant different in male and female respondents' perception of the outcome of women appointed into political administrative offices. The calculated t – value of 2.96 was found to be higher than the critical t – value of 1.96 at the .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The objective of this paper has been to investigate the gender differential of women participation in politics and community development. Using data gathered from a research designed structured questionnaire on participation in politics and community development, which was subjected to t-test analysis. All the six null hypotheses formulated and tests were rejected. Thus, the findings suggest that there were statistical significant difference between male and female perception of women participation in politics and community development. From the results, the mean scores of female respondents were higher than their male counterpart which indicated that women possessed positive perception of women level women participation in decision making, influence of women in community development and outcome of women appointed into political administrative posts. These results strengthen Akinleke and Afolayan (2015) opinion that women participation in politics and community development will differs and restrictive in Nigeria.

This study has shed lights to the women political participation in Ogun east senatorial district. It was revealed that, in the study area women's participation in politics and community development is limited. If could be concluded that there is a differential

perception of the number of men and women / voted into elective political offices and the level of women participation in decision-making. Also, differential perception exists in the influence of men and women in community development. Again in the outcome of men and women appointed into political administrative offices. It is recommended that government and community should recognize women's role and contribution to the society. Women should be encouraged not only to join but also be active participants in the politics and community organizations in order to show their potential for community and development.

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