

FACTORS INFLUENCING WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN GOVERNANCE IN EDO STATE OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The research examined the factors that influence women's engagement in governance, using Edo State, Nigeria, as a case study. It investigated the amount of influence of women's participation in government in Edo State, Nigeria. It also analyzed the extent to which education influences women's engagement in Edo State governance in Nigeria. To meet the stated goals, two hypotheses were developed to guide the investigation. Data was collected mostly through a questionnaire. The study's population consisted of 4,625 prominent lawmakers from Edo State's three senatorial districts, with a Taro Yamani formula-determined sample size of 368. The Chi-Square(X^2) test of proportion was adopted in the analysis of data. After statistically analyzing the data obtained from the primary source, it was found that there is low women participation in the governance of Edo State, Nigeria. It was also discovered that there is a link between women's educational attainment and their poor engagement in government in Edo State, Nigeria. The findings of this study suggest that state governments should take policy action to encourage more women to engage in governance. The document advocated, among other things, that the Edo State government foster girl-child and women's education as a deliberate strategy to ensure that more women have access to quality education that will prepare them to compete with males in the state's politics and governance.

Keywords: Education, Governance, Politics, Women Participation

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1. INTRODUCTION

Globally, the topic of women's involvement in governance has dominated political discourse. Giving more women the chance to engage in politics and decision-making is a significant factor that is vital to achieving the aim of gender equality among the many women's concerns being addressed globally. Because of the patriarchal nature of our

society, which tends to promote discrimination against women, girls' low educational attainment, the traditional view of women's roles in society, socio-cultural and economic factors that work against women, and women's apathy or lack of interest, politics in Nigeria, and Edo State in particular, is assumed to be a man's domain, into which no woman needs to venture. According to data from 133 nations given by the United Nations Statistics Division (2020), women account for 2.18 million (or 36% of elected members of local deliberative bodies). There are just two countries where the percentage of women in local government has reached 50%, but there are eighteen more where the percentage exceeds 40%.

Worthy of note is the fact that the low representation of women in the governance of Edo State has over the years not received scholarly attention. This is because little or no research work had been done to showcase the leadership potentials of Edo women by way of creating awareness among Edo people or electorates to enable them appreciate the need to vote Edo women politicians into the government of the state. This study which is an attempt to fill this research gap, is aimed at promoting and projecting Edo women, based on their leadership abilities that can make them contribute meaningfully in governance hence the need to give them a chance and elect them into the government of Edo State of Nigeria. Women underrepresentation in the governance of Edo State is not only an indication that there has not been a full democracy in place but lack of women in governance means that the state will not be able to benefit from the potentials and contribution of women in terms of the overall development of the state. There is need for Edo state government to consciously promote gender equity in political representation so that both male and female can contribute equally to the overall development of the state. Devlin and Elgie, as quoted in Hadjis (2003), Aderlini (2004), Maveneka (2004), Hamadeh-Banerjee, and Hadjis (2013), agree that women's political engagement has benefits. They discovered that women lawmakers add new aspects or place a different emphasis on a wide range of health, legal, and social policy issues, including HIV/AIDS and property rights. As a result, there are now more women in Rwanda's parliament, helping to provide the groundwork for women's progress, empowerment, and advancement in all aspects of society. As a result, it is widely assumed that more female participation in Edo State governance will promote overall development, female emancipation, and the advancement of women's and children's rights.

Despite the country's patriarchal culture, Adenike (2013) reports that women in Nigeria have a long history of defying stereotypes to participate in political government. According to her, the successes of Queen Amina of Zaria, who led warriors to drive invaders out of Zaria, and Moremi of Ile-Ife, whose sacrifice for her people exemplifies the selfless leadership that we badly lack now, were numerous in our pre-colonial past. Notable women leaders in recent history include Hajia Gambo Sawaba, who battled for the rights of the oppressed in Northern Nigeria, Margaret Ekpo, a well-known civil rights activist, and Fumilayo Ransome Kuti, a crusader and opponent of autocratic authorities who led Egba women in a tax protest. Lagos's Iyalode Tinubu is a prime example of how well-represented women are in the business world.

In the past, some of these women made their mark in politics and governance in Nigeria. Three women to be precise were appointed into the house of chiefs and they are Chief (Mrs) Olufunmilayo Ransome kuti (appointed into the Western House of Chiefs); Chief (Mrs) Margaret Ekpo and Janet Mokelu (both appointed into the Eastern Nigeria House of Chiefs) (Attoe, 2002 in Suleiman, 2017). In the Second Republic (1979-1983),

just like the First Republic produced only 1 female senator in the person of Late Franca Afegbua. a few Nigerian women won elections into the House of Representatives at the national level. Some of these women were Mrs. J.C. Eze of the Nigerian People's Party (NPP) who represented Uzo Uwani Constituency in former Anambra State; Mrs. V.U. Nnaji, also of the NPP who represented Isu Constituency in Imo State and Mrs. Abiola Babatope of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) who represented Mushin Central II of Lagos State (Soetan, 1998 in Agbalajobi, 2017). There's a chance these women's legacies will disappear (Adenike, 2013) if no effort is made to continuously encourage women to participate in politics and governance.. The political environment in Nigeria's Edo State is similar to other regions of the globe in that there is a gender disparity in politics. Women are made almost invisible and kept out of the political sphere, which is frequently thought of as the domain of men. As a result, the state is deprived of the opportunity to capitalize on their potential and development-related contributions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The biggest problem facing Edo women today, as it does for other Nigerian women, according to Oronsaye-Salami (2005), is that they are invisible in political matters and are excluded from the political sphere. It is clear from this invisibility that very few Edo women have truly succeeded in entering the political sphere in Edo State. Since Edo State's founding in 1991, women have only made up a small portion of the governing class—less than 30%—as opposed to 50/50 in other countries, such as Germany (Oronsaye-Salami, 2005). Despite the efforts made by women to mobilize voters, their contributions are sometimes minimized. Women make up a sizable section of Edo State's population, hence removing them would deprive the state of new perspectives and contributions.

Based on the aforementioned, it is evident that males have dominated positions of governor and deputy governor, as well as speaker and deputy speaker of the legislative house in Edo State, since the introduction of civil democracy in Nigeria in 1999, to the detriment of females. Furthermore, there is no proof that Edo women have ever had the chance to apply for these positions. When the 2024 governorship election rolls around, there will be a need to argue in favor of Edo women holding these posts in the incoming political administration. Without a doubt, Edo State is squandering valuable resources by ignoring hundreds of talented women who are prepared to apply their professional experience in public life, but are unfortunately underrepresented in the positions of political leadership in every sphere in the state.

Three categories can be used to categorize women's political participation: (1) Executive branch, where they serve as female heads of state, cabinet members, or government representatives; (2) Legislative branch, where they represent their country in national assemblies and parliament; and (3) Judicial branch. Agbalajobi (2021) claims that there aren't many women in leadership and political positions in Nigeria. There are now only seven (7) female members in the 360 House of Representatives and 109 senators. She continued by explaining that barriers that keep women from running for office include the high expense of politics and the lack of access to education, which limits their ability to obtain productive jobs. Political parties require women to submit expressions of interest and nomination papers in order to run for seats on their platforms, yet frequently they lack the funds to do so. A democratic form of governance is predicated on the idea that men and women should have equal access to representation and participation in all spheres and tiers of public life. According to

Aluko (2011), this notion is undermined by the lack of or underrepresentation of women in the decision-making and implementation process itself. Singh (2011) believes that women are more likely to have policies and plans that, at best, are insensitive to the realities of women and, at worst, help to further marginalize them in the future when they are excluded from political decision-making. Including women and granting them authority in political institutions increases the participation of women's voices in global decision-making.

As demonstrated by the Maputo Protocol, which contains particular rules for women's political participation, the continent has long been committed to advancing gender equality in political decision-making, according to Banda (2021). Gender equality's fifth Sustainable Development Goal calls for increased and significant female participation in political decision-making on a worldwide scale. If Africa doesn't alter its institutions, procedures, and policies to guarantee that more women are seated at the political decision-making table, the global goal that is supposed to be accomplished by 2030 will remain a pipe dream.

In Dimkpa and Wilcox's (2008) study, "Perceptions of Women on Factors Responsible for Low Female Participation in Politics in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria," 200 women—122 married and 78 single—were chosen from two Rivers State institutions, the University of Port-Harcourt and the University of Port-Harcourt Teaching Hospital—to participate in the survey. Frequency counts, percentages, and the chi-square statistic were used to examine the data at the significance level of 0.05. According to 91% of respondents, the primary cause of women's poor political participation is a lack of financial resources. Among the others were low self-esteem (84.3%), a religious perspective (79%), a socio-cultural perspective (77%), and, finally, a lack of education (74%). Nonetheless, the report suggested that the Federal Government support campaigns for women running for elective offices and that the National Council of Women's Society host workshops to educate women and advocate for a shift in their attitudes.

In Kenya, Kasomo (2012) observes that women make up a little above half of the entire population and constitute a critical portion of promoting democratization of political system in the country. However, available data shows that they are underrepresented in political appointments in government. The reason possibly responsible for this state of affairs, could be that adequate attention and solution have not been given to gender issues in electoral politics. This gives upper hand to men to the detriment of women.

According to Nigeria's Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)/Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Coalition Shadow Report (2008), women made up 48.78% of the country's population as of the 2006 census; however, they have never been equally represented or expressed in the country's political life or decision-making processes. In the State Houses of Assembly, the National Assembly, and local government councils, women are underrepresented. They are glaringly underrepresented or altogether absent. The research went on to say that there is more to the problem of women's limited participation in administration and decision-making than the common belief that "there are no suitable women" to fill open posts or accept political appointments. The systemic denial of women of access to leadership and decision-making is further exacerbated by the patriarchal hierarchy of the Nigerian society.

According to report from UNDP (2009), there were no female legislators in 15 states—including Edo State—and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in several states in Nigeria during the 2007 elections. In actuality, women's political involvement in governmental decision-making in Nigeria has been steadily declining. Men continue to predominate in political participation at the federal level of government. In their study *"Factors Militating against Women Active Participation in Politics in Ofu Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria,"* Ajibade *et al.* (2012) examined the obstacles that prevent women from actively engaging in politics.

The study's population is made up of people who are at least 18 years old, or franchise age. 550 women in all were chosen using the multi-stage cluster sampling approach from eleven wards. Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative methodologies produced the study's data. 450 of the 550 surveys that were distributed were appropriate for analysis. While data collected through interview methods were content-evaluated, data obtained through questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive techniques like frequency counts and percentages. The study found that low levels of education or lack thereof, insufficient financial resources, enlightenment, and unclear political party policies toward women's political aspirations are the main causes of women's poor political participation. The results of the study led to several recommendations, one of which was that political parties establish a clear policy on women who aspire to be politicians. This will assist women in making informed decisions about entering politics.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the theory of patriarchy. The theory of patriarchy was popularized by Goldberg (1977), one of the conservative theorists, who expressed strong doubts about how far traditional gender roles could, and should be transformed. Other early advocates of patriarchy were Beauvoir (1953) and Millet (1969) who argued that patriarchy laid emphasis on male-dominance of female folks as men are seen to control access to institutional power, mould ideology, philosophy, art and religion to suit their needs. In his work, "the inevitability of Patriarchy", Goldberg (1977), argued that authority and leadership are and always have been, male-dominated. The basis of this theory is the assertion that sexual/physiological differentiation leads inevitably and universally to differences between males and females. Therefore, if this assertion remains the truth, it means that nowhere are most women going to change traditional sex-roles to attain equality with men in public power, status and rewards (Goldberg, 1977). From the above premise, the exponents of the theory—"the theory of patriarchy" have agreed that there is male dominance in leadership, authority, status and public life. The reason, it appears to be, is that the society has assigned different roles to male and females. While men have been programmed to play politics and participate in governance, and hence take charge of all major political and economic positions in society, women are only assigned reproductive and domestic responsibilities. Exponents of the theory however recommend the need to have more number of women in politics and in all levels of political governance and decision-making. To them, an adequate critical mass of women in politics would place them in a comfortable position to share power with men.

In explaining the theoretical underpinnings of this study, authors applied the theory of patriarchy to analyze the study since it will help to appropriately explain the factors that constrain Edo women from mass participation in governance in Edo State of

Nigeria, which is the patriarchal nature of the society. Political culture in addition to traditional cultural behaviour concerning women have since been a big challenge to women's representation, participation in politics, and access to power or political governance. Patriarchy is a social system in which males are the primary authority figures central to social organizations; males occupy roles of political leadership, moral authority and control of property, and where fathers hold authority over women and children. It implies the institutions of male rule and privilege, and entails female subordination. This is true of political governance in Nigeria and Edo State in particular, which has been dominated by men to the disadvantage of women due to the patriarchal nature of Edo people. Patriarchy which requires women to observe social norms, may cause women to lose out on opportunities for their own involvement in political governance. Obedience to these norms may also explain why many women, particularly Edo women, do not even support the political ambitions of other females.

Table 1. Compares the Representation of Women in Nigeria's General Elections Held in 2003, 2007, and 2011

Position	Available seats	Women elected in 2003	Women elected in 2007	Women elected in 2011
Presidency	1	0	0	0
Senate	109	3 (2,27%)	9 (8,26%)	8 (7,34%)
House of Reps	360	21(5,83%)	25(6,94%)	12(3,33%)
Governorship	36	0	0	0

Source: IPU PARLINE Database and Gender Audit (2012)

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study falls within descriptive research as it has the objective of discovering, examining and analyzing the factors militating against women engagement in state governance in Edo State. A survey design was used. The purpose of the survey research design was to allow flexibility in carrying out research on the analysis of women engagement in political governance in Nigeria's Edo state. The population of the study is four thousand, six hundred and twenty-five (4,625) key politicians (holding political positions) across the three senatorial districts in Edo state, and were selected from each of the eighteen (18) local governments areas located in the three senatorial districts. The sources of data for the study were mainly primary and secondary. Questionnaire, complemented by interview of the respondents constituted the primary instrument for data collection for the analysis of the study. A research questionnaire was designed for the study to elicit information from female and male politicians, who are key respondents still serving in government across the three senatorial districts of Edo State. The Likert Scale of five points was adopted to structure the questionnaire i.e 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'strongly disagree', 'disagree' and 'undecided'. A comprehensive assessment and critical evaluative analysis of existing secondary source of information relevant to the study was done in the section of the literature review. Proportional and purposive sampling methods were adopted to select respondents for the study since the population and wards differ from one local government to another. There are three senatorial districts in Edo State comprising eighteen (18) Local Government Areas. Key politicians (holding political positions) across the three senatorial districts of Edo State were randomly sampled for this study. Care was taken to ensure that the eighteen (18) Local Government Areas of Edo State were represented in the sample. In determining the sample size for this study, Taro Yamani formula was used to get the sample size of

368. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to test the hypotheses. The Friedman test was used to isolate important socio-cultural factors militating against women participation in governance. Classification of data in contingency table was tested using the Chi-square statistics. The chi-square tool of analysis was used to establish the proportion of responses in relation to the variables as contained in the research questions. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, i.e the level of influence of women participation in state governance in Edo State of Nigeria, and the extent education influences women participation in state governance in Edo State of Nigeria, two hypotheses were developed to direct the investigation in order to accomplish the aforementioned goals. A questionnaire served as the main tool for gathering data. The study encompassed 4,625 influential politicians from all three senatorial districts in Edo State, with a sample size of 368, ascertained through application of the Taro Yamani formula. In the data analysis, the Chi-Square(X^2) test of difference in the level of influence of women participation in state governance as well as the extent education influences women participation in state governance was done. In relation to the first objective which is: the level of influence of women participation in governance in Edo State, the test showed a significant difference in the level of participation in political governance between men and women in the state as expressed by the respondents with Chi square value(597.978) significant at 5% level since the P-Value(0.00*) $<$ 0.05. This implies that men significantly participate more than women in politics and state governance in Edo State. As regards the second objective which is the extent education influences women participation in state governance in Edo State of Nigeria, the test of analysis showed that education significantly influences women participation in the governance of Edo State with the Chi square value (146.538) significant at 5% level since the P- Value(0.00*) $<$ 0.05. This implies that the level of education limits women participation in state governance and the general leadership in Edo State.

Testing was done on the following study-formulated hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: In Edo State, Nigeria, there is no statistically significant variation in the level of influence that women have on government.

Hypothesis 2: In Nigeria's Edo State, there is no statistically significant correlation between education and women's participation in state governance.

Table 2. The Distribution of Important Respondents Throughout Edo State's Three Senatorial Districts

LGA by Senatorial District	Coun-cillors	No of party exco	L.G. Chair -men	Vice Chair-men	Secre-taries	Super- visory Council- llers	House of Assem- bly	State Exco
Edo South							24	23
Egor	10	220	1	1	1	6	-	-
IkpobaOkha	10	220	1	1	1	6	-	-
Oredo	12	264	1	1	1	6	-	-
Orhunmwon	12	264	1	1	1	6	-	-
Ovia North-East	12	264	1	1	1	6	-	-
Ovia South- West	10	220	1	1	1	6	-	-
Uhunmwode	11	242	1	1	1	6	-	-
Edo Central	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

LGA by Senatorial District	Councillors	No of party exco	L.G. Chair-men	Vice Chair-men	Secretaries	Supervisory Councilors	House of Assembly	State Exco
Esan Central	10	220	1	1	1	6	-	-
Esan North-East	11	242	1	1	1	6	-	-
Esan South-East	10	220	1	1	1	6	-	-
Esan West	10	220	1	1	1	6	-	-
Igueben	10	220	1	1	1	6	-	-
Edo North	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Akoko Edo	10	220	1	1	1	6	-	-
Etsako Central	10	220	1	1	1	6	-	-
Etsako East	10	220	1	1	1	6	-	-
Etsako West	12	264	1	1	1	6	-	-
Owan East	11	242	1	1	1	6	-	-
Owan West	11	242	1	1	1	6	-	-
Total	192	4224	18	18	18	108	24	23

Source: Ainabor's Field Survey (2021)

Table 3. Distribution of the Frequency of Valid Questionnaire Returns Received by Edo State Local Governments

LGA by Senatorial District	Questionnaire Administered	Questionnaire returned	Percentage Administered	Percentage Returned
Edo South				
Egor	20	20	5,4	5,4
IkpobaOkha	20	20	5,4	5,4
Oredo	22	22	6,0	6,0
Orhunmwon	22	22	6,0	6,0
Ovia North-East	22	22	6,0	6,0
Ovia south-West	20	20	5,4	5,4
Uhunmwode	20	20	5,4	5,4
Edo Central				
Esan central	20	20	5,4	5,4
Esan North-East	20	20	5,4	5,4
Esan south-East	20	20	5,4	5,4
Esan west	20	20	5,4	5,4
Igueben	20	20	5,4	5,4
Edo North				
Akoko Edo	20	20	5,4	5,4
Etsako Central	20	20	5,4	5,4
Etsako East	20	20	5,4	5,4
Etsako West	22	22	6,0	6,0
Owan East	20	20	5,4	5,4
Owan West	20	20	5,4	5,4
Total	368	368	100	100

Source: Ainabor's Field Survey (2021)

Table 4. The Proportion Of Women In State Governance And Politics

Questionnaire Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
i. The level of women participation in politics and state governance in Edo State is very encouraging.	-	-	86	23,4	192	52,2	60	16,3	30	8,2
ii. The level of men participation in politics and state governance in Edo State is very encouraging.	260	70,7	34	9,2	40	10,9	8	2,2	26	7,1
iii. Men participate more than women in politics and state governance in Edo State.	242	65,8	51	13,9	30	8,2	29	7,9	16	4,3
iv. Women have occupied political positions more than men in the political governance of Edo State since 1999.	32	8,7	52	14,1	253	68,8	23	6,3	8	2,2
v. Women participate actively in party activities and political rallies.	34	9,2	262	71,2	48	13,0	18	4,9	6	1,6
vi. Women like being card-carrying members of their political parties.	50	13,6	204	55,4	30	8,2	60	16,3	24	6,5

Source: Ainabor's Field Survey (2021)

Table 5. Women's Participation In State Governance And Education

Questionnaire Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
i. Education has a relationship with women's engagement in Edo State political government.	26	7,1	158	42,9	81	22	65	17,7	38	10,3
ii. Women's low engagement in Edo State politics and government since 1999 can be attributed to their educational level.	64	17,4	187	50,8	62	16,8	41	11,1	14	3,8
iii. Lack of financial opportunities on the part of women can be responsible for their low participation in politics and governance in Edo State.	20	5,4	181	49,2	101	27,4	66	17,9	-	-
iv. Poor self-image or self-confidence of women is responsible for their low participation in politics and governance in Edo State.	26	7,1	229	62,2	49	13,3	38	10,3	26	7,1
v. Apathy or lack of interest is a factor militating against women participation in politics and governance in Edo State.	2	,5	277	75,5	40	10,9	39	10,6	10	2,7

Questionnaire Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
vi. Fear of failure to perform on the part of women is responsible for their low participation in politics and governance in Edo State.	-	-	252	68,5	36	9,8	64	17,4	16	4,3
vii. Edo State government should make it a matter of policy to promote gender equity in allocating positions in government.	44	12	241	65,5	-	-	73	19,8	10	2,7

Source: Ainabor's Field Survey (2021)

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION RESULT

In general, the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected at the 0,05 level of significance if the P-value is less than 5% (0,05), or P-value < 0,05. Here, H₀ is refused, whereas H₁ is approved. This rule was utilized to test the hypotheses developed for this investigation.

H₀: There is no notable difference in the level of influence that women have in state governance in Nigeria's Edo State.

This hypothesis was investigated by gathering the respondents' opinions on the topic of analysis and comparing the various levels of influence that women have in governance. The difference in the level of agreement with the assertions regarding the participation of men and women in state governance in Edo State was ascertained using the Chi Square (X²) goodness-of-fit test. Table 6 displays the outcome.

Table 6. Chi Square Analysis of Edo State's Women's Political and State Governance Participation Level

Scale of Response	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	X ² Value	DF	P Value
Undecided	26	73,6	597,978	4	0,00*
Disagree	8	73,6			
Strongly Disagree	40	73,6			
Agree	34	73,6			
Strongly Agree	260	73,6			
Total	368	368			

* Significant at 5% critical level

According to the respondents, the test revealed a substantial difference between males and women's levels of participation in political governance in the state, with a Chi square value of 597,978 that was significant at the 5% level since the P-Value (0,00*) < 0,05. This suggests that in Edo State, men participate in politics and state governance at a considerably higher rate than women. Since the study discovered a substantial difference in the level of influence that women's engagement in governance has in the studied area, the null hypothesis under test is rejected.

H₀: In Nigeria's Edo State, there is no discernible link between women's participation in state governance and education.

Using the chi square goodness-of-fit test, education was chosen as the dependent variable to investigate this hypothesis and its impact on women's participation in Edo State governance. Table 7 below displays a summary of the results.

Table 7. Chi Square Test on Women's Engagement in State Governance and Education

Scale of Response	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	X ² Value	DF	P Value
Undecided	38	73,6	146,538	4	0,00*
Disagree	65	73,6			
Strongly Disagree	81	73,6			
Agree	158	73,6			
Strongly Agree	26	73,6			
Total	368	368			

* Significant at 5% critical level

The study found that education has a significant impact on women's engagement in Edo State government, with a Chi square value of 146,538 at the 5% level (P-Value(0,00*) < 0,05). Thus, the null hypothesis under consideration was rejected. The study concludes that women's participation in state governance and general leadership in Edo State is limited by their educational level.

DISCUSSIONS

The survey found that Edo women participate in politics and state governance at a substantially lower rate than men. This finding significantly agrees with Tong (2003), whose study of gender gap in political culture and participation in China revealed that women's traits negatively correlated with political culture and participation measures, and Dimkpa and Wilcox (2008), whose study of perceptions of women on factors responsible for low female participation in politics in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria, revealed that women's poor self-image, religious attitude, socio-cultural attitude, and lastly, lack of education are responsible for the low level of women participation in politics and governance.

The survey also found that education has contributed to women's poor participation in Edo State government. For example, the majority of Edo women's poor educational attainment has been identified as a contributing factor to their minimal engagement in Edo State governance. Women's incapacity to get financing or financial help due to their level of education has an impact on their political participation. This is why Edo women have not been able to engage in Edo State's governance in the same way that males have.

The study revealed that educational level of women has been responsible for women's low participation in the governance of Edo State. As regards education being responsible for low participation of women in politics and governance in Edo State, the study agrees with the work of Shvedova (2007) on "Obstacles faced by Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers", using Sweden and India as case studies. The result of the study revealed that illiteracy and limited access to education are socio-economic obstacles impacting on women's vertical mobility in politics. This is in line with Goldberg's theory of patriarchy adopted for this study which asserted that authority and leadership are and always have been, male-dominated. The theory is in support that there is male dominance in leadership, authority, status and public life. This is true as only the few well-educated women in Edo State possess the boldness, courage and the means to compete with the men in the politics and governance of the state.

5. CONCLUSION

It is obvious from the study that men participate in a more significant level than women in the governance of Nigeria's Edo state. There is need to address the disparity between the level of men and women's participation in governance in order to allow more Edo women with leadership potentials to make contributions to the governance and development of Edo State. As Edo women are not coming up to participate in governance in Edo state due to their inability to compete with their male counterparts, there is need to address the discrimination against women in the governance of Edo State by allocating political positions to women on quota basis.

The State House of Assembly can address this gender gap by implementing a gender quota or representative statute to enable more women to be involved in the state governance in line with the Affirmation Action policy for female representation. Also, if gender equality in political participation in Edo State is to be achieved, political parties inside the state must also change their policies and postures that support ongoing discrimination against women. From the study, it was also discovered that the low level of Edo women in educational attainment was responsible for their inability to participate in the governance of Nigeria's Edo State like their male counterparts. It calls for the encouragement of girl-child and women education in the state. To this end, Edo State government should as a matter of deliberate policy encourage girl-child and women education. This will enable more women to have access to quality education that will give them all it takes to face men in the field of politics and governance.

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