



Gender Equilibrium and Dynamics of Democratization in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: Contingent Input of Women Education

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Abstract

A Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The survey population comprised, women who were politicians. The sample size of the study was One thousand and eighty (1,080) respondents selected, through a snow-balling sampling technique. Thirty (30) respondents were selected from each of the thirty six (36) states in Nigeria to constitute the study population. Three research instruments were raised to for the study. A self-structured and developed research instruments by the researcher titled, "Questionnaire on Gender Equilibrium and Dynamics of Democratization in Nigeria's Fourth Republic" Contingent Inputs of Women Education" was used to generate quantitative data. It was fashioned on four likert rating scale: SA, Strongly Agreed, A – Agreed, D- Disagreed and SD – Strongly Disagreed, and rated on 4,3,2 and 1 point, respectively. Qualitative data were generated through, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The research instruments were validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation while, its reliability was done using, test-retest method at two weeks interval, and 0.69 co-efficient reliability was established. Quantitative data were analyzed, using descriptive statistics (simple percentages, frequency counts and mean) while, qualitative data were collated, transcribed and analyzed, qualitatively. Based on the results of the study it was concluded that, education could positively motivate women involvement in democratization, and also, enhanced their consciousness and orientation for participation in democracy. Recommendations were that Nigerian government should prioritize women education. Also, financial supports should be given to women, while they are on educational programmers.

Keywords: Gender, Equilibrium, Dynamics, Democratization, Fourth Republic, Women Education

1. Introduction

The Fourth republic started in 1999 when a along military and came to an end with the death of General Sani Abacha. The republic was led by President Olusegun Obasanjo in a civilian presidential system of government. The republic ushered in a sustained commitment to democratic practice, principles and governance after a long period of military era. The republic was welcomed with a high expectation. However, almost three decades into the current republic, democracy practice in Nigeria has remains discouraging unsavory and fledgling-one decimated by underwhelming feelings of dissatisfaction by the Nigerians (Olawari and Abdulrasheed). However, this is not to say that landmark achievements and progress have not been achieved.

In the Fourth Republic in Nigeria there are development in terms of electoral process, emergence of political parties and establishment of democratic institutions. Progresses were also made by establishing institutions like; Independence National Electoral Commission (INEC), the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

These institutions play crucial roles in ensuring the integrity of elections, protections of human rights and combating endemic corruption in the nation, Nigeria. The most notable and noticeable achievement of the Republic in Nigeria is a milestone of uninterrupted democracy. According to Kuccici and Inusa (2024). *Nigeria's Fourth Republic inaugurated in 1999, presents a pivotal chapter in the country's democratic history, marking over two decades of uninterrupted democracy a milestone that invites both celebration and critical reflection.*

The Fourth Republic fostered greater political stability and increased political participations, there are substantial reforms to address systemic issues hitherto, militating effective democratic practice in the nation. Also, there were no political parties that were ethnic based in outlook like, the situation in the 1st and 2nd Republic. The military truncated the 1st and 2nd Republics following widespread public disenchantment with the political class and loss of legitimacy (Diamond, 1988). Other related reasons including; prolong period of economic decline, ethnic and religious polarization partly, made worse by ethically based political parties, massive and entrenched corruption typified by looting of public funds, politicians' flamboyant lifestyles, bad governance, public disillusionment, and so on (Jake, 2024)^[3]. During the Fourth Republic, there was a stable multi-party system that allowing various political interests and ideologies. The republic was also characterized by reforms and international engagements. However, the republic also witnessed several challenges. Ogbonnaya. Omoje and udefuna (2012)^[4], stated that electoral irregularities and malpractices, inter-and intra-ethnic rivalries, religious crises, and insecurity, poverty, weak democratic institutions and institutionalized corruption. Oluwari and Abdulrasheed (2020), identified security challenges as the most pressing challenge to democracy in the Fourth Republic. One of the major challenges is Boko Haram insurgency and various forms of military and armed groups have engaged in activities such as; pipeline vandalism, kidnapping, and attacks oil installation. The underlying grievances include; environmental degradation, lack of development and perceived marginalization of the region despite it significant oil wealth, and contribution to the nations' economy. Moreover, gender is also a major challenge to the practice and growth of democracy in Nigeria. The issue of women or gender balance in democracy especially, in the Fourth Republic is very worrisome and generating intrigues among women folds. While women voters are active in Nigerian democratization, and participation of women in politics remains critical low due to several factors. Despite the overwhelming number of women against men in population their participation in politics in Nigeria is very low. Some factors that have been attributed to this are; patriarchal structures and educational attainment. Women hold a disproportionately small number of decision-making positions in government and political parties, despite constitute approximately the half of the country population. Erinsakin (2012)^[9], stated that Nigeria's populations is dominated by a female. However, is disheartening that they are voiceless in the society. Women are subjected by culture and tradition. Women and confirmed to domestic activities. They are regulated in socio-economic and political scheming, participation and involvement. Women are seeing as reproductive machine. Educationally, in most communities

their education is not prioritized. Politically, women are orchestrated, deprived and alienated and by extension in democratic practice and governance their contributions are not significant. Today, in the political landscape, specifically, since Nigeria's Fourth Republic women's representation is an issue of a great concern. The concern for gender balance in governance has been a lingering issue of hot debate and discourse in political gatherings. Why women representation is low when compare to male, politically. Gender gap in democratic practice in Nigeria, specifically, during the Fourth Republic has been a good a source of conducting researches by the academia.

Observably, the researcher observed from the avalanche of extent studies the researchers observed that most studies have been through self-reported by the researchers. In other words, much has not been done empirically on gender equilibrium and dynamics of democratization in Nigeria's Fourth Republic through contingent roles of women education. It was against this foregoing background this present study was carried out.

Statement of the Problem

Women constitutes the highest number of population in Nigeria. However, their participation in democratizations process remains an issue of a great concern specifically, in the Fourth Republic in Nigeria. This was seen attributed to many factors, such as; tradition, culture, religion, illiteracy, and so on.

Women's low participation in politics has been an issue of discourse among women fold and stakeholders in democratizations process in Nigeria in the last few decades. Also, it has been a good source of carrying out studies or researches by academia. The researcher of this study however, observed that several studies on women and democratization has not been specifically focused empirically and contingent roles of women education. This observed gap was a motivational factor that necessitated this present study.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objectives of the study was on gender equilibrium and dynamic of democratization in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: contingent roles of Women Education (WE). The specific objectives were to;

1. ascertain impact of Women Education on women interest in politics in Nigeria; and
2. determine the influence of Women Education on Women's orientation and consciousness of their roles in democratic practices in Nigeria ; and
3. establish the relationship between women Education and Women's opportunities in democratic practice in Nigeria.

Research Questions

Three research questions were raised to guide the conduct of the study

1. Does Women Education has influence on women interest in politics in Nigeria's Fourth Republic?
2. Can Women Education make women to be well oriented and conscious of their roles in democratization?
3. Does Women Education has influence on Women's opportunities in democratic practice in Nigeria's Fourth Republic?

Significance of the Study

The results of the study would be significant to stakeholders in democratization process in Nigeria in the following ways; First and foremost, the findings of the study would provide a base line data on the relationship between women. Education and gender balance in democratization in the Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

Moreover, the findings of the study will enable government and women to know the relevance of education on their involvement and opportunities in democratic practice in Nigeria.

Lastly, the study will add to the existing literature within the confine of the research thus, becomes a good source of reference to researchers in future. The study would be made accessible by the public through Educational Resource (EDR) and other educational media platforms.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the research. The population of the study comprised, women who were politicians in Nigeria. The sample size of the study was One thousand and eighty (1,080) respondents selected, through a snow-balling sampling technique. In each of the thirty six (36) states in Nigeria, thirty (30) respondents were selected for the study, three research questions were raised to

guide the conduct of the study. Data were obtained for the study quantitatively and quantitatively. A self-structured research instruments by the researcher were used to obtain quantitative data, titled "Questionnaire on Gender Equilibrium and Dynamics of Democratization in Nigeria's Fourth Republic : Contingent Input of Women Education". It was fashioned on four likert rating scale; strongly agreed (SA), agreed (A), disagreed (D), and strongly disagreed (SD), rated on 4,3,2, and 1 points, respectively. Qualitative data were generated through, Focus Group Discussion (FGDs), and the research instruments were validated by two experts in measurements and evaluation while, its reliability were determined through test –retest method at two weeks interval. 0.69 coefficient reliability was obtained. Data obtained quantitatively were analyzed using, descriptive statistics (simple percentages, frequency counts and mean (\bar{x}) while, qualitative data were collated, transcribed and analyzed, quantitatively.

Presentations Findings and Discussion of Results

Presentation of Findings

Research Questions One: Does women education has influence on women's interest in politics in Nigeria's Fourth Republic?

Table 1: Showing simple percentages, frequency counts and mean (\bar{x}) on does women education has influence on women interest in politics in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

		N=1,080				C= 2.5			
S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	N	MEAN \bar{X}	Decisions	
1	Education motivates women's interest in democratic practice	1,020 94.44	32 2.96	13 1.20	15 1.38	1,080	3.90	Accepted	
2	Women without education are always withdrawn from politics	988 91.48	36 3.33	38 3.51	18 1.66	1,080	3.84	Accepted	
3	Most women who are educated believe that participating in politics is their right	1,033 95.64	42 3.88	3 0.27	2 0.18	1,080	3.95	Accepted	
4	Women who are not educated do not see active participation as right	1,032 95.55	44 4.07	1 0.09	3 0.27	1,080	3.94	Accepted	
5	Educated women do have self-esteem to participate in politics	1,055 97.68	11 1.01	13 1.20	1 0.09	1,080	3.96	Accepted	
6	Uneducated women do not have self-esteem to participate in politics	1,022 94.62	44 4.07	6 0.55	8 0.74	1,080	3.92	Accepted	
7	Educated women do feel that they are relevant like men in politics	1,014 96.88	39 3.61	22 2.03	5 0.46	1,080	3.90	Accepted	
8	Due to lack of education most women feel that politics is men's game	1,047 96.94	22 2.03	5 0.46	6 0.55	1,080	3.95	Accepted	
	Total Weight	8,211 95.03	270 3.12	101 1.16	58 0.67		3.92	Accepted	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Keys:

N = Total Number of Respondents

C = Cut off Point

SA = Strongly Agreed

A = Agreed

D = Disagreed

SD = Strongly Disagreed

Table 1 above, presents the findings on research questions one on item (1), responses got were 1,020 (94.44), 32 (2.96), 13 (1.20) and 15 (1.38) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. On item (2) the following responses were; obtained; 988 (91.38), 36 (3.33), 38 (3.51), and 18(1.66) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. On items (3), 1,033 (95.64), 42 (3.88), 3 (0.27) and 2 (0.18) for strongly agreed, agreed,

disagreed and strongly disagreed were obtained. On item (4), 1,032(95.55), 44(4.07), 1 (0.09) and 3(0.27) responses for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed were got. On item (5), 1,088 (97.68) 11 (1.01),13 (1.20) and 1 (0.09) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed were obtained. On item (6) the following responses were got; 1,022 (94.62), 44 (4.07), 6(0.55) and 8 (0.74) for strongly, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagree. On time

(7), responses got were 1,014 (93.88) 39 (3.61), 22 (2.03) and 5 (0.46) responses were got from strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Finally, on item (8) response got indicated 1,047 (96.94), 22 (2.03), 5 (0.46) and 6 (0.55) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. The total weight of the findings shows that the average rating scale of four ($\bar{x} = 2.5$) was lesser than the mean of average rating scale of ($\bar{x} = 3.92$).

The results portend that women education has positive and significant contribution on women's interest in politics in Nigeria's Fourth Republic democratization.

Research Question Two: Does women education make women to be well orientated and conscious of their roles in democratization in Nigeria's Fourth Republic?

Table 2: Showing simple percentages percentages, frequency counts and mean (\bar{x}) on can women education make women to be well orientated and conscious of their roles in democratization in Nigeria Fourth Republic?

S/N	Items	N=1,080				C= 2.5		MEAN \bar{X}	Decisions
		SA %	A %	D %	SD %	N			
9	Educated women are well grounded with democratic principle better than uneducated women	1,023 94.72	33 3.05	5 0.46	19 1.75	1,080	3.90	Accepted	
10	Most very educated women lack knowledge of democratic principles	1,041 96.38	32 2.96	1 0.09	6 0.55	1,080	3.95	Accepted	
11	Education makes women to know that they can be involved in democratic practice like men	1,029 95.27	41 3.79	4 0.37	6 0.55	1,080	3.93	Accepted	
12	Despite education acquired many women do not know that some skill they make roles in democratic practice like men	9 0.83	1 0.09	23 2.12	1047 96.94	1,080	1.04	Rejected	
13	Education makes women to grab their roles in politics	1,039 95.64	33 3.05	11 1.01	7 0.64	1,080	3.93	Accepted	
14	Lack of education may hinders women's ability to take their rightful position in politics	1,033 95.64	33 3.05	7 0.64	7 0.64	1,080	3.93	Accepted	
15	Education makes women to understand political scheming like men	1,049 97.12	14 1.29	8 0.74	9 0.83	1,080	3.94	Accepted	
16	Uneducated women do not like politics like men	1,055 97.68	11 1.01	5 0.46	9 0.83	1,080	3.95	Accepted	
	Total Weight	7,278	188	64	1,110		3.57	Accepted	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Keys:

N = Total Number of Respondents

C = Cut off Point

SA = Strongly Agreed

A = Agreed

D = Disagreed

SD = Strongly Disagreed

Table 2 above, presents the findings on research question two, a like, 12 on item (9), 1023 (94.72), 33 (3.05), 5 (0.46) and 19 (1.75) were obtained as responses for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. On item (10) 1041 (96.38), 32 (2.96), 1 (0.09) and 6 (0.55) were got as responses for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. On item (10), 1,041 (96.38), 32 (2.96), 1 (0.09) and 6 (0.55) were got as responses for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. On item (11), responses got were, 1,029 (95.27), 41 (3.79), 4 (0.37) and 6 (0.55) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. On item (12), the following responses were got; 9 (0.83), 1 (0.09), 23 (2.12) and 1,047 (96.94) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed, as well. On item

(13), responses were obtained for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. On item (15), 1,094 (97.12), 14 (1.29), 8 (0.74) and 9 (0.83) responses were obtained for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

The total weight of the findings reveals that the average rating scale of four ($\bar{x} = 2.5$) was lesser than the mean (\bar{x}) of average rating scale of ($\bar{x} = 3.57$). This indicates that educated women were more conscious and orientated on their roles in democratic practice in Nigeria Fourth Republic.

Research Questions Three: Does women education has influence on women's opportunities in Nigeria's Fourth Republic?

Table 3: Showing simple percentages, frequency counts and mean on does women education has influence on women's opportunities in Nigeria's fourth Republic?

S/N	Items	N=1,080			C= 2.5		MEAN \bar{X}	DECISIONS
		SA %	A %	D %	SD %	N		
17	Most women who are educated are elected into political offices ahead of uneducated women	1,022 94.62	33 3.05	2 0.18	23 0.18	1,080	3.90	Accepted
18	Women that have no education are rarely elected into political offices	1,044 96.66	13 1.20	19 1.75	4 0.37	1,080	3.94	Accepted
19	Women are of the same proportion in political opportunities like men	6 0.55	9 0.83	32 2.96	1,033 95.64	1,080	1.06	Rejected
20	Women with education are not in the same proportion with educated men in political appointments	1,044 96.66	29 2.68	6 0.55	1 0.09	1,080	3.95	Accepted
21	Education is a determinant factor for women representation in local, state and national assemblies	1,033 95.64	33 3.05	9 0.83	5 0.47	1,080	3.93	Accepted
22	Education is not a yardstick or factor that determine women representation in local, state and national assemblies	7 0.64	13 1.20	19 1.75	1,041 96.38	1,041	1.06	Rejected
	Total Weigth	4,156 64.13	130 2.00	87 1.34	2,107 32.51		2.97	

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Keys:

N = Total Number of Respondents

C = Cut off Point

SA = Strongly Agreed

A = Agreed

D = Disagreed

SD = Strongly Disagreed

Table 3 above, shows the finding on research question three. On item (17), responses got were 1,022 (94.62), 33 (3.05), 2 (0.18) and 23 (2.12) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed, On item 17, responses got were, 1,022 (94.62), 33 (3.05), 2 (0.18) and 23 (2.12) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. On item (18), responses got were, 1,044 (96.66), 13 (1.20), 29 (1.75) and 4 (0.37) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed, also. On item (19), 6 (0.55), 9 (0.83), 32 (2.96) and 1,033 (95.64), responses were obtained for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. On item (20), the following responses were got; 1,044 (96.66), 29 (2.68), 6 (0.55) and 1(0.09) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively.

On item (21), responses obtained indicated, 1,033 (95.64), 33 (3.05), 9 (0.83) and 5 (0.47) for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Finally, on item (22), 7 (0.64), 13 (1.20), 19 (1.75) and 1,041 (96.38) were got as responses for strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

Generally speaking, the total weight of the findings shows that the average rating scale of four ($\bar{x} = 2.5$) was lesser than the mean (\bar{x}) of average rating scale of ($\bar{x} = 2.97$). Therefore, it implies that educated women had opportunities in democratic practice and governance in the Nigeria' Fourth

Republic.

Discussion of Findings

The result on research questions one align with the opinion of the Magaji (2014)^[5] that with education women would develop interest in political issues and that they would be able to exercise political rights as responsible citizens of the nations, Nigeria. Also, that it would affords them the opportunities of making more efficient choices in terms of participation and making life choices.

The submission corroborated during the FGDs by some discussants. A male discussant had this to say that; *Most women politicians are educated otherwise, they would not have developed interest in politics. Any women who is not educated there is limitation to her participation in politics. This is a basic truth.*

FGD – A politician and state woman leader of NNPP in Ondo State, Nigeria

In the same vein, other discussants said that; *Education is very fundamental and basic in the life of human being in all sphere of life. We must not be deceiving ourselves participating in politics without a sound education is like wasting one's precious time. My interest in politics today is as a result of my education, honestly.*

FGD – A woman politician and PDP member in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

The result on research questions two was also buttressed by the view and submission of Ukoko (2016)^[7] that education is empowerment. Women with sound and functional education would not sit at the fence rather, understand political processes and actively be involving in political affairs of their nation. The submission was in consonance with the view expressed by a discussant during the FGDs.

Anybody without education might not be understand the direction of Nigerian politics, fully and it will make it difficult for a meaningful contribution from such a person. I think this is the major challenge most uneducated politicians are facing within the country

FGDs- A woman APC ward leader in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Similarly, another woman politician expressed that, *You cannot perform better in any activity without having a full knowledge of all that it requires. Most of us, women, only have interest in politics without understanding and having knowledge of it principles and intricacies. This is not unconnected with lack of education.*

FGDs – A women APC politician in Lagos State, Nigeria.

The result of research questions three was also in agreement with the opinion of Odionye and Foego (2016), that education is a necessary factor for women effective participation in Nigerian politics. education allows women to challenge traditional barriers, contribute to national development and hold elected officials accountable, ensuring more equitable representation and policy making. The result also agrees with the opinion of Erinsakin (2012)^[9], that education would enable women to take them rightful positions in the society. The above submission also, aligns with this view expressed by discussants, during the FGDs. A discussant said that; *I have never seen a woman or women that occupied election political positions that was/were uneducated. Education is a cogent favour that would make them to achieve success and performance.*

FGDs – A women PDP leader in Delta State, Nigeria.

Another discussant said that;

Without being educated nobody or government would consider you for any political offices or appointment. So, our women should brace up to acquire education. It is them, they would become more relevant in politics and political scheming in the country, Nigeria.

FGD – A women politician and a member of State Sports Commission in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study conclusion were made that, women education could ginger women interests on democratization, make them to be well conscious and orientated on democratic principles, and practice. Also, women education opened opportunities for women like, their men counterparts in terms of participation in civil rule governance, representation in assembles (local, state, and national).

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions the following recommendations were made;

1. Nigerian government should prioritize women education educating women
2. Women should be enlightened and encouraged on importance of their education to their emancipation and relevance in democracy in Nigeria.
3. Educational opportunities should be made more accessible by women in Nigeria.
4. Financial support should be given to assist women on educational programme
5. Women who are educated should be given opportunities to be appointed for elective positions in Nigeria and so on.

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