

Political Financing and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic: A Public Perception Survey of Edo South Senatorial District

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Abstract

Political expenses in Nigeria are rising above manageable proportions, creating an uneven playing field in election contests. Electioneering expenditure increases at every passing general election year. The figures are quite shocking and the requirement numerous in both explicit and implicit capacities. Apart from the mandatory fee for nomination forms is the unregulated campaign finance, administrative charges, formalization of intent and all such levies which combine to make election a game won by the highest bidder. This may not be a burden to many especially those who had earlier corruptly-enriched themselves as participants in previous governments. The less financially fortunate ones are however either priced out of the game, get neck deep in debt or pitch tent with sponsors often under conditions that enslave them. As a political entrepreneur, the sponsor renders his supports in the character of investment by offering to party and candidates his 'ability' and then claim ownership, control and manipulation of party and voting structure in return for economic benefit. Money is fast replacing the rescinding electorate input in electioneering; therefore, the electorates don't constitute the focal points for service on attainment of office, rather attention is on the 'much' that appropriates aspirants to power; raising the question of 'buying to serve?' The study is tailored from the theoretical perspective of the investment theory in politics, and aims to elicit the perception of the public on political finance, as well as interrogate the phenomenon as a prime mover of political amoralities in public offices via survey research as distinct from extant literatures. Findings are that the cost of elective public offices affects recruitment and undermines democratic consolidation in Nigeria. It poses higher cost to governance and affects negatively its developmental trajectory, as well as impacts negatively on the ethical consideration of the individuals seeking offices.

Keywords: Cost, Political finance, Electioneering, Elective public offices, Investment

Introduction

The cost of mounting the podium of governance for elective public offices in Nigeria has been a major concern as electioneering expenditure is increasing and becoming unregulated which often creates an uneven playing field in election contest. This poses huge threat and constraints to the electoral process; the cardinal principle of democratic consolidation (Yagboyaju, 2012). Deepening democracy requires going beyond elections to building strong institutional foundations with viable methods of operation. Political party is a strong institution that provides a vital platform by which citizens can aggregate their interests, make policies and hold government accountable. This motive is fast ebbing out as money increasingly becomes a driving force that determines political outcomes. In Nigeria, parties demonstrate significant strength but contain a number of features that make them less than ideal vehicles for the representation of the political demands and aspirations of Nigerians (Liebowitz and Ibrahim, 2013). They lack sufficient ideological depth and a service-orientated approach to politics unlike the time of the early nationalists and the First Republic when vision, principles, ideology and meticulously developed manifestos formed the basis on which power was pursued. The political exercise which commenced since 1999 seemed clueless and confused (Yagboyaju, 2012).

Political campaign and party expenditures are growing in geometric proportion beyond the literal capacity of the individual political aspirant. This practice has raised questions on the nation's democracy and electoral sanity. Excess money distorts the candidate selection process within parties and largely influences who wins elections. In other words, it determines electoral victory. Candidates invest large amounts of their private savings to contend in elections, meaning that only those willing to invest large amount of money become candidate (Romero, 2007).

In advanced democracies like the United States of America from where Nigeria borrowed its brand of presidential democracy, government partly fund parties. In those countries, there is discipline

as individuals and groups form parties based on very strong ideological framework and they go all out to talk to people and organizations who share their beliefs and passion and who in turn contribute financially to support their operations. When they field candidates in elections, they 'sell' them to the electorates based on those beliefs (and not by imposition) and if the electorate 'buy' them, all well and good, otherwise, they move on with persistence and hope for a better luck next time (Oji, Eme and Nwoba, 2014). The opposite is the case in Nigeria where parties are seen as investments bereft of any ideological foundation and not issue oriented. As such, there must be returns if they are to stay in business. The increasing cost of party and campaign expenditure for the procurement of public offices has become a common phenomenon in Nigeria's politics. This cost is so high as to be prohibitive to all but the richest men, or those who have their hands on public funds (Ebohon and Obakhedo, 2010).

Outside the mandatory fee for nomination form and formalization of intent, other fees cut across administrative charges, payment for delegates and all such levies which combine to make election a game won by the highest bidder. This scenario works as lubrication for the proliferation of political investors where an individual or group bankrolls the party or political aspirant and claims ownership, control and manipulates party structures, candidates and even the general electoral process itself. Sometimes, many political aspirants who cannot bankroll their electoral expenses get neck deep in debt or pitch tent with 'patrons' so as to be able to weather the financial storm of party and campaign often under conditions that enslave them to their sponsors (Ebohon and Obakhedo, 2010). Most individuals and parties become vehicle in the hands of a few political entrepreneurs who invest huge amount of money and expect concurrent rewards on such investment in the form of public works and procurement contracts, prebendal appointment of cronies to public offices and other forms of prebendal activities. The fallout has led to mass electoral/political violence and political destabilization, disempowerment of the generality of the Nigerian electors, the exclusion of alternative parties seeking to participate in electoral politics and the absence of an effective system to regulate political finance (Oji, *et al.* 2014). Existing literatures have captured the phenomenon of higher cost of elective public offices in diverse perspectives (Oji, *et al.* 2014; Obiorah, 2004; Ukase, 2015; Kura, 2011), but a vacuum still exist which is the opinion of the public on the crux. It is this gap the work aims in part to fill by taking the issue to the public via its 'Perception Study'.

Research questions raised are stated as follows:

- What is the perception of the public on the issue political finance?
- What are the factors responsible for the increasing cost of elective public offices?
- Does the cost of elective public offices pose higher cost to governance and affect negatively its developmental trajectory?
- How does the cost of elective public offices affect recruitment and the political economy of democracy?
- Does the phenomenon impact negatively on the ethical consideration of the individuals seeking office?
- What possible solutions can be proffered to tackle the phenomenon?

Research hypothesis generated are that the high cost of elective public offices pose higher cost to governance and affects negatively its developmental trajectory. The cost of elective public offices affects recruitment and democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Lastly, the phenomenon impacts negatively on the ethical consideration of the individuals seeking office.

By Methodology, the population of the study is restricted to Edo South Senatorial District which figure stands at 1,726,041 (National Population Commission, 2006). The sample size of this study is five hundred (500) respondents out of which 488 questionnaires were retrieved. The technique utilized in this study is the multistage sampling. The method of data collection is the questionnaire while the techniques for data analysis are the statistical methods of simple percentage and chi-square. Simple percentage is first adopted in ascertaining the percent of the personal data and responses of the respondents on each question on the questionnaire. Furthermore, they are analysed with the statistical tool of chi-square and Yules Q or Gamma (γ) as the case may be to determine whether there is a relationship or correlation between the variables inherent in the stated assumptions and drafted hypothesis and the results interpreted.

Conceptual Clarification

Cost is the total value of inputs consumed to generate a certain output. It is the inflow used up to obtain a required outflow (Hepworth, 1990). The concept of cost can be either explicit or implicit. Explicit cost is the out-of-pocket expenses of a venture to purchase or hire the inputs required to generate a certain output. Cost therefore, is the use of money or the use of other material resources for political activities. Cost does not relate to out-of-the pocket expenses alone, but also the strains and rigours being undergone in the course of attaining or achieving an output- implicit cost. For example, many aspirants undergo diverse manner of constraining rigours and strains defined by unofficial rules for which candidates are susceptible as against their individual ethical considerations. They must accept to be used as pawn for the selfish aggrandizement of their sponsors (Odiagbe and Obotoh, 2007). In some cases the aspirants carry the brief cases and become errand boys before their 'godfathers' anoint them for political office (Ibrahim, 2003). 'Political collateral' is one of the ways compliance is being demanded from clients on political investments. It ranges from the swearing of an oath in shrines to signing of undated resignation letters and the filming of a scene where resignation announcement is being made by the client prior to elections, which would be publicized peradventure the client attempts to renege on the agreements reached (Ebohon and Obakhedo, 2010), or the dictate of the sponsor. Furthermore, ordinary Nigerians are extricated from the participation in politics which marks a huge cost to merit. In this work we will look at both perspectives to public office attainment in Nigeria.

Political finance has two broad connotations: money used for electioneering (campaign funds) and money used for political party expenses (party funds) (Eme and Anyadike, 2014; Emelonye, 2004). Though there are other forms of political finance but these two form the basis of our discussion because they constitute the foundation of every political activity. For Pinto-Duschinsky, political finance is 'money for electioneering'. Since political parties play a critical part in election campaigns in many parts of the globe, and since it is difficult to draw a distinct line between campaign costs of party organizations and their routine expenses, party funds may reasonably be considered political finance, too. He goes on to argue that party funding includes not only campaign expenses but also the costs of maintaining permanent offices, carrying out policy research, and engaging in political education, voters registration, and other regular functions of parties (Eme and Anyadike, 2014).

Theoretical Perspective

The study adopts the investment theory of politics, a political theory developed by Thomas Ferguson (Ferguson, 1983). The theory argues that business elites not voters play the leading part in political systems (Ferguson, 1995). For Ferguson, some business interests favour and others oppose. Businesses invest in candidates and political parties, and expect a return on their investment. Since they have conflicting interests, the public gets to throw its weight unto one side or the other, but proposals that are adverse to business as a whole do not get on the public agenda. No political party has ever supported a measure adverse to a business or corporate interest, unless there was some other business or corporate interest behind it (Ebersole, 2011). For Ferguson, money power normally outweighs public power, and that candidates and issues without the backing of big money do not normally come before the public (Ferguson, 1995).

The theory further argues that since money driven political systems are expensive and burdensome to ordinary voters, policy is created by competing coalitions of investors not voters. Political parties (and the issues they campaign on) are created entirely by business interests and act as the political arms of these business groups and therefore don't typically try to reconcile for policy. For the investment theory economic changes cause shift in power (change in political power) since political parties are subordinate to campaign donations which mostly come from wealthy investors and corporations unlike the case where voters change their political views based on the performance of the party and vote differently. The investment must yield corresponding benefit because any such investment motive is directed at profit making.

The real market for political parties are defined by major investors, who generally have good and clear reason for investing to control the state.... blocs of major investors

define the core of political parties and are responsible for most of the signals the party sends to the electorate” (Ferguson, 1995: 206).

These parallel the phenomenon of political finance in Nigeria and explain the domineering role of money over the electorate mandate. The logic is that political investors take advantage of the financial incapacity of some parties and candidates to become an investment house by bankrolling their electioneering expenses and employing the manipulation of party machinery to capture state resources for themselves. He offers to political parties and politicians seeking to capture and control political power his ability (financial strength, influence coverage, knowledge of the voting public and possible ways of subverting the electorate mandate) to enforce voters compliance based on his intuitive grasp of voting structure in return for economic benefit. These comprise resources deployed to yield benefit within the shortest possible time in tandem with the principles of investment found in the economic scene where capital are to yield returns. The investors nurture strategic contacts with actors who control ‘first degree resources’ (land, money, work force) of the state which are the politicians. They are dependent on the goodwill of politicians and political party for their continued existence and relevance (Olarinmoye, 2008), in like manner as investors in the economic scene depend on the effective working and strategy of their investment houses or channels to make returns.

With his control of the party structure he does not only become the sponsor of politicians, he uses his control of party machinery to impose his client/protégées (Ojo and Lawal, 2013: 187; Abia, 2006) as party candidates for elective offices and ensure their electoral success through activities that subvert the electoral process of recruitment and inimical to democratic echoes (Akubo and Yakubu, 2014). Such success of the party at elections translates into direct access of the investor to first degree resources controlled by the state (Olarinmoye, 2008). To this extent, his investments have paid off, as he now secures stable access to state resources and ensures their continued existence as a successful political businessman.

The Cost of Elective Public Offices in Nigeria: An Overview

In aspiring for elective offices in Nigeria, the financial demands range from party demands to campaign expenditures amongst others. The aspirants are mandated by the party to pay fees that ordinarily are beyond their financial capacities, such as the purchase of party nomination forms, Expression of Intent Form (EOI), administrative charges, payment for delegates and all such levies which combine to make election a game won by the highest bidder.(Okoye, 2007; Umoru, 2013; Oji, et al. 2014).

Table 1: Fees for nomination form for 2015 elections (PDP)

Position	Fee for nomination form	Fee for Expression of Interest (EOI) form
Presidential candidate	₦20 million	₦2 million
Governorship candidate	₦10 million	₦1 million
Senatorial candidate	₦4 million	₦500, 000
House of Representative candidate	₦2 million	₦500,000
House of Assembly candidate	₦1 million	₦200, 00

Source:Abubakah, 2014

Table 2: Fees for nomination form for 2015 elections (All Progressives Congress)

Position	Fee for nomination and (EOI) forms
Presidential candidate	₦27 million

Governorship (Incumbent governors)	₦10.5 million
Governorship (fresh aspirants)	₦5.5 million
Senatorial candidate (sitting senators)	₦5.3 million
Senatorial candidate (fresh aspirants)	₦3.3 million
House of Rep candidate (returning)	₦3.2 million
House of Rep candidate (fresh aspirants)	₦2.2 million
House of Assembly (sitting lawmakers)	₦800, 000
House of Assembly (fresh aspirants)	₦550, 000

Source: Adopted from Odunsi, 2014:n.p, and modified by the author.

In the area of campaign finance, the cost is enshrined in existing laws and there are also various legal instruments guiding the operations of political parties. These include the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended, the 2002 and 2006 Electoral Acts, and 2010 Electoral Act as amended. Others include the statutory rules of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and other informal rules. These laws provide copious provisions of the extent and limitation of political parties with respect to campaign/political financing. Section 93(1-12) of the 2006 Electoral Act clearly stipulates the ceiling of elections expenses. This is intended to curtail the influence of money in electioneering process. The same Act (section 93(9)) also limited individual and corporate donations to any contestant to ₦1 million (Ukase, 2015). To a large extent, the provisions of these statutes are never adhered to as the stipulated limits are blatantly exceeded with impunity.

Someone running for the Presidency can spend up to ₦1 billion, a Governor can spend up to ₦200 million, ₦40 million for Senate, ₦20 million for House of Representatives, ₦10 million for State House of Assembly and Local Government, and ₦1 million for ward councillors. Even with these limits, there is no enforcement of them from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), which has powers to monitor campaign finance, audit the accounts of political parties, and make that information available to the public, as enshrined in Section 153 of the 1999 Constitution, as well as Part 1 of the Third Schedule. The lack of attention paid to this crucial area is of grave concern, because the unchecked influx of money into politics will produce governance that has been captured by a tiny minority, to the detriment of a majority. The result is a political process captured by special interests, resulting in an undue influence on government policy, distortion of political discourse, and a reduction in political participation (Oji, *et al.* 2014).

The Rigour of Bowing to Non-official Rules

The exorbitant financial commitment assigned to party and electioneering exercises have resulted in many candidates becoming much vulnerable to the realities of their financial ordeal. Candidates who do not have the financial capacity to bankroll these expenses have an option of either withdrawing from the race or seeking supports which often do not come without a price. Hopkin, (2004) observed that party activities are costly and are done only by those with a personal stake. Driven by these stakes, anything goes in the bid of actualizing the goal of capturing governmental powers. This is a mechanism which the political elites use via the instrumentality of political parties to rally support for political ascendancy or retention of relevance. The character of these mechanisms tends to define the rules of engagement for which candidates are susceptible as against their individual ethical considerations. The conditions that are placed before them for which compliance must be made are replete with diverse manner of constraining rigours and strains. They must accept to be used as pawn for the selfish aggrandizement of their sponsors (Odiagbe and Obotoh, 2007). In some cases the

aspirants carry the brief cases and become errand boys before their 'godfathers' anoint them for political office (Ibrahim, 2003).

Financially weak candidates or those whose loyalty are in doubt face the rigour of candidate substitution irrespective of being already elected as party flag bearer, or the table of party consensus might not turn in their favour. This is not only likely but possible because elections are not won through hard-fought electioneering but through rigging (Awowede, 2003). For example, the elected party flag bearers who emerged after rigorous primaries of the run-off to the 2007 general elections were substituted with candidates who did not take part in the primary election (Sonoye and Nduka, 2007). The process of consensus in party candidate selection has become a household name in Nigerian political system since 1999. It is a political vocabulary introduced to convince someone sometimes forcibly - to step aside in their political ambition for their opponents (Kura, 2011). Others lose their offices or are relieved of their governmental duties as seen in the case of Senator Olusola Saraki and Real Admiral Mohammed Lawal (Rtd) of Kwara State. The former bankrolled the campaign expenses of the later who became the governor of the state between 1999 – 2003, but Governor Lawal could not comply with the dictates of his sponsor and the consequence was quite grave as he was voted out in 2003 through the political machinery of Senator Olushola Saraki who then delivered the position to his son (Ogbulafor, 2003) who is perceived to be much compliant. Is a political aspirant at risk not having a godfather to guard his back? It presents a scenario of being between the devil and the deep blue sea. If you don't have a godfather one cannot win election, if you do, he runs your government else there would be dire consequences.

There are several ways patrons demand compliance from clients which insights the concept of 'political collateral' on political investments. It ranges from the swearing of an oath in shrines to signing of undated resignation letters and the filming of a scene where resignation announcement is being made by the client prior to elections, which would be publicized peradventure the client attempts to renege on the agreements reached (Ebohon and Obakhedo, 2010), or the dictates of the sponsor. A vivid case of this transpired between Mr. Chris Uba and Dr. Chris Ngige of Anambra State when it was reported that the governor resigned from office (Ibrahim, 2003). It was the instrument of political collateral that was used against him.

Failures and embarrassment litter the parameters for measuring governance performance in Nigeria, which cannot be detached from the debilitating mechanism that appropriates candidates to power.

Citizen Alienation from the Political Process

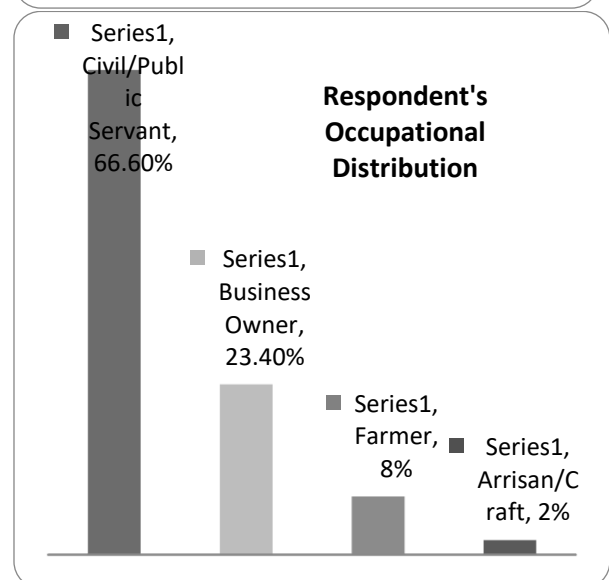
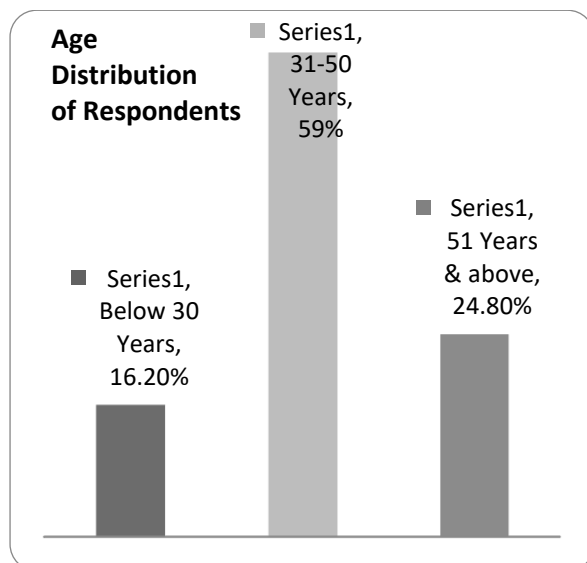
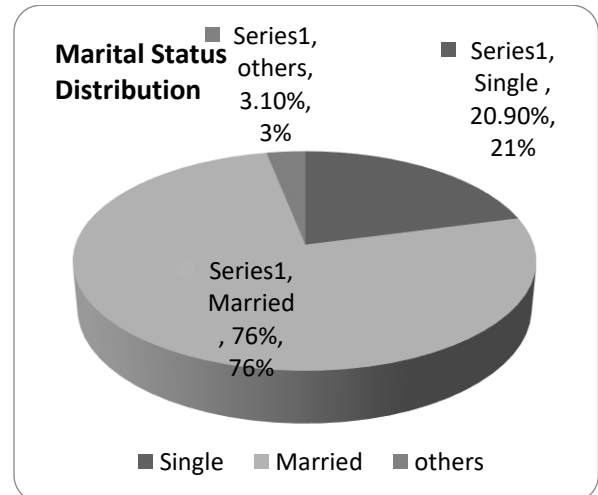
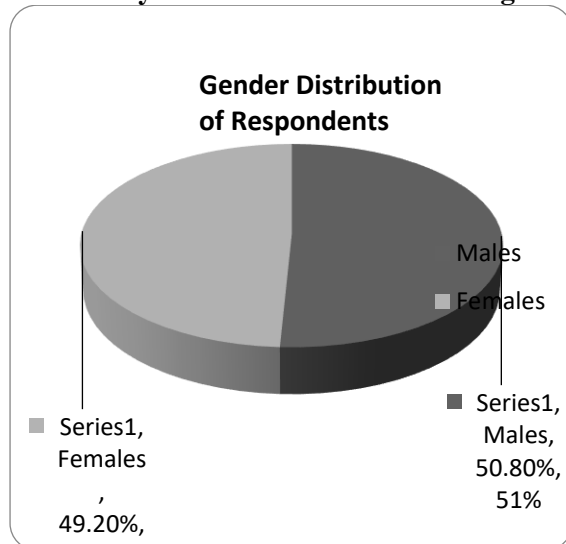
In advanced democracies party candidates sell their ideas to the populace through the functional vehicle of party ideology, and merit is the platform on which the mandates of the electorates are earned. In Nigeria, party is devoid of character and ideology and as such these imperatives are substituted for and sacrificed on the altar of mediocrity. Through the culture of building on the influence and weight of more influential party members, candidates whose political credentials are rather unclear and lack popular support in all its manifestations hide under the influence of party 'moguls'. For Ihonvbere (2002:19), these moguls are 'dangerous big men' with undemocratic characters, whose track records show nothing but corruption, waste, violence, human right abuses, misplaced priorities and a pathological commitment to the recycling of mediocrity. This is likened to the Machiavellian principle; 'the end justifies the means' (Adeoye, 2009). This is a misinterpretation of Machiavelli.

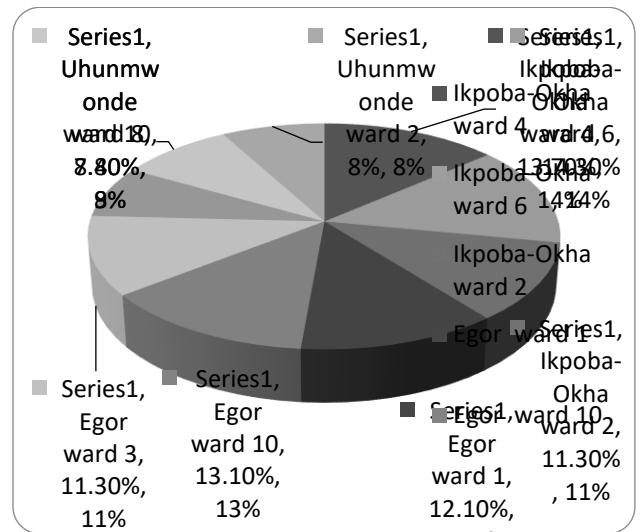
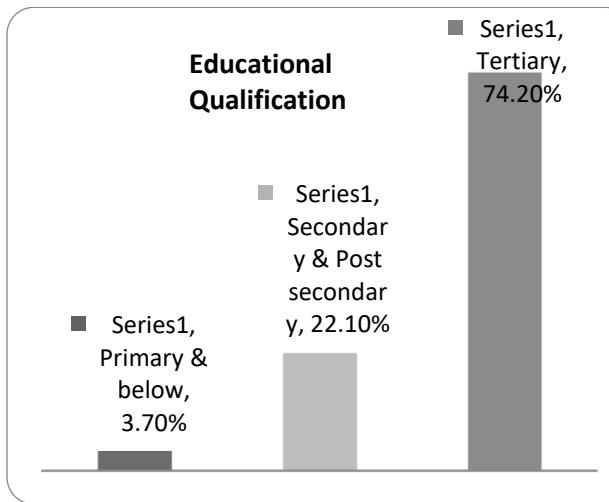
In the 2007 general elections, a level playing ground did not exist during the campaign (Isekhure, 2010). While the Electoral Act 2006 provides in Article 103(2) that 'State apparatus, including the media, shall not be employed to the advantage or disadvantage of any political party or candidate at any election', incumbent parties at federal and state levels took advantage of resources attached to their offices in support of their campaigns (Isekhure, 2010). This is detrimental to those ordinary Nigerians that do not have their hands on public funds. Elections are won not because the candidates are popular or enjoy the people's goodwill but satisfy the criterion of financial flexibility which tends to be the prerequisite for relevance and recognition. The resultant outcome is that men and women who do not have money but have ideas on how the state should be ordered and the modus

operandi are priced out of the race and never have a chance of contesting and winning a free and fair election (Ebohon and Obakhedo, 2010).

Comparatively, even when integrity driven, honest but less privileged individuals do run, they have to spend so much money to match the financial exuberance of opponents that they inevitably become corrupt in their quest to recover expenses or return the favour of over-optimistic sponsors. In Nigeria where compliance with and enforcement of administrative law is endemically lax, previous perfunctory attempts to prevent the ‘commercialisation’ of politics, have largely failed (Emelonye, 2004). In consideration of the enormous opportunity for self-enrichment through the instrumentality of state power, such aspirant yields to the whims and caprices of a sponsor. The state becomes an instrument of domination, exploitation and marginalization rather than the bastion of human rights, equality, social justice, and eradication of poverty and the sanctity of the rule of law. At any level of government, they use state power to visit violence, pain and poverty on the masses; and in their localities they simply become leaders in the ‘Local axis of evil’ created to reproduce an existing unjust system (Ihonvbere, 2004).

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings





For clarity, respondents' Local Government of Origin displays that of 488 respondents in this study, 39.3% are from Ikpoba-Okha LGA, 36.5% are from Egor LGA and 24.2% are origin of Uhumwonde LGA. Respondents' Ward Distribution indicates that 13.7%, 14.3% and 11.3% are from Ikpoba-Okha LGA ward 4, 6 and 2 respectively. From Egor LGA ward 1, 10, and 3 we have 12.1%, 13.1% and 11.3% respectively, while 7.4%, 8.8% and 8.0% represents Uhumwonde LGA ward 10, 8 and 2 respectively.

In the examination of the perception of the public on the cost of elective public offices in Nigeria the aim of the study has been accomplished through an empirical survey. 93.6% knows what it cost to run for elective public offices such as the Presidency, Governorship etc. in Nigeria while 6.4% do not. This shows the level of political awareness of the public on what it cost to mount elective public offices in Nigeria, which is quite appreciable. On the issue of political party's collection of compulsory fees for nomination forms from candidates 4.5% are in support of the idea while 95.5% are opposed to the idea. The objection of the populace in this regard is not unconnected with the danger and consequences of the influence of money in politics. This also is linked to the fact that not all candidates can weather the financial storms of electioneering finance in such exuberant capacity.

On the response to the magnitude of campaign finance in Nigeria, 97.5% are of the opinion that the magnitude of campaign finance in Nigeria is high, 2.5% opined that it is average while none (0%) took a stand that campaign finance in Nigeria is low. Furthermore, 82.4% are of the opinion that the financial requirements are burdensome on the political aspirants while 17.6% negates the view. On the question of whether some of the aspirants sometimes resort to borrowing funds or sell their personal property to contest in elections, 82.8% are affirmative of this position while 17.2% are opposed to it. This implies that electioneering finance in Nigeria is literally beyond the financial capacity of the individual aspirants, so they go extra miles to meet up.

Response on whether some aspirants sometimes seek the assistance of a sponsor in other to meet the financial requirements, 81.8% agrees that some aspirants sometimes do, while 18.2% disagree with the position. Furthermore, 92.4% agrees that for such an aspirant to earn the assistance of a sponsor he must meet the criteria of loyalty and compliance to his dictates, while 7.2% disagree. This is to mean that sponsors assistance in their diverse manifestations do not come without a price. To this extent it is inclined to the direction of an ulterior motive which is detrimental to the political credentials of the candidate in the long run, to the party and to the Nigerian nation at large. More so, 97.3% are affirmative that such compliance sometimes impact negatively on the ethical consideration of the individuals seeking office, while 2.7% are opposed to that. Money politics influences candidates in the wrong directions as it tends to becloud the character of his/her disposition. In many cases decisions are taken for them as they are being dictated to. In essence they give in to daunting corrupt practices which ordinarily are against their ethical consideration. These ones become tied to the apron strings of their sponsors. The point is that it either they give in to these options and be compelled and tied down by certain political collateral to which they have previously committed themselves, or become priced out of the contest. It is against this backdrop that 1.4% responded positively to the question of it being wise for aspirants to become errand boys or swear in shrines before his sponsor endorses him for office, while 98.6% are opposed to that response.

The response of those that agree that sponsors sometimes make their unflinching financial contributions in the character of investment that must yield profit stands at 82.6%, while 17.4% disagree to it. Such investment motives corroborates where an individual or group bankrolls the party or political aspirant and claim ownership, control and manipulates party structures, candidates and even the general electoral process itself. 90.4% are of the view that the rate of desperation of some aspirants to win election at all cost in light of the financial commitment involve is high, 8.8% responded that such rate of desperation is average which 0.8% are of the view that it is low. Such desperation drives them to adopt any possible ways to win elections at all cost which accounts for why elections has become war to be fought and won, "do or die" affair and winner takes it all as notable about most elections conducted in Nigeria. 95.9% of the respondents agree that some aspirants with the backing of his sponsor sometime resort to non-democratic

means to capture power, while 4.1 % are in disagreement to the opinion. The non-democratic means to capture power involves all possible ways of subverting the electoral process to impose candidature. 95.7 % agrees that non-democratic electoral process of recruitment undermines democratic consolidation in Nigeria, while 4.3% do not. Any act that is inimical to electoral integrity plays down on democratic consolidation.

On the issue of cost to governance 72.7% agrees that servicing the sponsor/offsetting backlogs of electoral expenses by the aspirant on assumption of office increase cost of governance, while 27.3% are oppose to this view. Since public offices in Nigeria can be likened to commodity that is being bought and sold, when succeeding to office cost a fortune, one would expect such an individual to recoup backlog of debt incurred on ground of electoral expenses, replenishing both his own funds, and those of his benefactors. These are monies that would have been channeled for socio-political and economic development purposes for the benefit of the public. This augments the opinion of the 81.8% who agrees that increased cost of governance undermines socio-political and economic development, as against the 18.2% who disagrees to the view. 61.1% agrees that reduced cost of party and electioneering expenses will allow for appreciable political sanity in Nigeria, while 38.9% disagrees. To this extent, the cost of mounting the podium of governance for elective public offices in Nigeria must be put at bay to allow for an even playing field in election contest.

On response to make suggestions of other ways to resolve the issue of party and electioneering expenses in politics, some of the respondents suggested that there is need for increased and prompt payment of government grant to political parties for electioneering so as to reduce the financial burden on them and to enable them function appropriately. Other groups of respondent maintained that excessive party financial demands on aspirants must be checked, to dissuade the imposition of outrageous fees on candidates. Another set of respondents are of the view that the electoral management body should wake-up to its statutory responsibilities to regulate party and campaign finance as well as step up capacity to ensure parties keep adequate records of their financial spending. Some others suggested that the mandatory fee for party nomination form should be abolished as well as other outrageous levies such as payments for delegates as mentioned by one of the respondents. However, some others suggested that the fee for party nomination form and other necessary levies should not be outrightly removed but placed at a manageable amount, reasoning that political parties need funds to run their activities. Furthermore, others affirmed that parties aiming to capture and control power and candidates vying for political positions must dissuade the influence of 'godfathers' (political investors). However, few others have it that candidates that cannot measure up with stipulated financial weight should step aside, rationalizing that wherever politics is mentioned its money equated.

Findings of this study in the testing of hypothesis by sex, hypothesis one shows that at 20% sampling error using the degree of freedom 1, data are not statistically significant. Therefore the hypothesis that there is no association between the sex of the respondents and their opinion that the cost of elective public offices affects recruitment and undermines democratic consolidation was accepted. In the last two series of the test (test two and three) data are statistically significant. Therefore, the research hypotheses (H_R) were accepted at less than 1% sampling error using the degree of freedom 1. The degree of association in test two shows that there is a large positive relationship between the sex of the respondents and their opinion that the cost of elective public offices poses higher cost to governance and affects negatively its developmental trajectory. For test three the degree of association shows that there is a very large positive relationship between the sex of the respondents and their opinion that the cost of elective public offices impacts negatively on the ethical consideration of the individuals seeking office. To this extent servicing the sponsor/offsetting backlogs of electoral expenses by the aspirant on assumption of office increase cost of governance. Candidates give in to daunting corruption as confirmed by the opinion of the public that some aspirants sometime seek the assistance of a sponsor in order to meet the financial requirements for

electioneering, and that for an aspirant to earn the assistance of a sponsor he must meet the criteria of loyalty and compliance to his dictates which sometimes impact negatively on their ethical consideration.

In the next phase of the test which is testing of hypothesis by respondent's age, hypothesis one and three show that at 20% sampling error using the degree of freedom 2, data are not statistically significant. Therefore, no evidence to prove that a relationship exists between the age of the respondents and their opinion that the cost of elective public offices affects recruitment and undermines democratic consolidation for test 1, or that the phenomenon impacts negatively on the ethical consideration of the individuals seeking office. In the second series of the test (test two) data is statistically significant. Therefore, the research hypotheses (H_R) were accepted at less than 1% sampling error using the degree of freedom 2. The degree of association is a negligible negative relationship between the age of the respondents and their opinion that the cost of elective public offices poses higher cost to governance and affects negatively its developmental trajectory.

The testing of hypothesis by marital status, hypothesis one and three shows that data are statistically significant at less than 1% sampling error using a degree of freedom of 2, confirming an association between the marital status of the respondents and their opinion that the cost of elective public offices affects recruitment and undermines democratic consolidation while for hypothesis three the variables also coincides. The result of the research shows that there is a very large negative relationship between the variables in hypothesis one while a small negative relationship exist between the variables in hypothesis three. Still on marital status, in hypothesis two, data are not statistically significant at 20% sampling error. Therefore, there is no evidence to prove that a relationship exists between the marital status of the respondents and their opinion that the cost of elective public offices poses higher cost to governance and affects negatively its developmental trajectory.

In testing the hypothesis by respondent's occupation, null hypothesis was accepted in the first two series of the test (test one and two) at 20% sampling error using a degree of freedom of 3. This implies that the respondents did not agree with the hypothesis as asserted by the researcher. Research hypothesis was accepted in the last test at 1% sampling error using a degree of freedom of 3, and the strength of the relationship is a medium negative association.

The fifth phase of the test by respondent's educational qualification clearly shows that the in the first test data are not statistically significant at 20% sampling error in a degree of freedom of 2. This allows the rejection of the research hypothesis and acceptance of the null hypothesis. On the reverse, in the last two series of this phase, data are statistically significant at 1% sampling error using a degree of freedom of 2. Therefore rejecting the null hypothesis and accepting the research hypothesis. The degree of association for both the second test and third test is a large positive relationship between the variables in question.

The last phase of the test which is the testing of hypothesis by local government of origin of the respondents, test one and two accepted the null hypothesis by showing that data are not statistically significant at 20% sampling error using a degree of freedom of 2. In the third series the research hypothesis was affirmed by showing that data are statistically significant at 1% sampling error using same degree of freedom of 2. The strength of association is a medium negative relationship.

Nevertheless, the acceptance and rejection of the null and research hypothesis reveals that many of the respondents actually agreed that the cost of elective public offices affects recruitment and undermines democratic consolidation in Nigeria, poses higher cost to governance and affects negatively its developmental trajectory as well as impacts negatively on the ethical consideration of the individuals seeking office amongst other opinions. Furthermore, the findings are in tandem with the researcher's assumptions that the cost is alarming and often creates an uneven playing field in election contest. It allows for the proliferation and striving of political investors and entrepreneurs who bankroll parties and candidates and claim ownership and control. It is a clog on the wheel of democracy, encourages corruption and the recycling of underdevelopment in Nigeria amongst other ills.

Understanding the Drivers of the Cost of Elective Public Offices

The history of Nigerian politics is entangled with money politics, and the term ‘politics’ can be used interchangeably with money. The size of a politician’s campaign ground can be an effective yardstick for measuring his wealth and influence but not for estimating how much people believe in his leadership abilities and potentials. Time is money to the electorate. Ears are rented. They chant aloud and sing praises when they clearly can’t understand or hear the campaign speech being delivered by the candidate. This doesn’t make them different from Nollywood actors (Ejiofor, 2015). This explains the political ignorance of the electorates as nothing goes for anything. An average Nigerian sees the election period as a blatant opportunity for him to grab his share of the ‘national cake’. Earlier in 2015, newspapers widely reported the massive sale of houses and other properties belonging to politicians at give-away prices in top cities like Lagos and Abuja. This is because of the huge financial demands for the assumption of leadership positions in Nigeria, with the masses stretching open hands to receive cash and other resources from competing sides. This could be likened to the ‘game theory’ in political science where both parties aim to win by exploiting weaknesses of an opposing side. The politician recklessly spending his hard-earned funds isn’t dumb or that magnanimous. The people constantly demanding for financial resources are not smart; they will pay an unimaginable exploitative interest rate over the next four years at the success of the candidate (Ejiofor, 2015).

Political corruption in its diverse manifestation plagues the system and also accounts for the huge cost of elective public offices. Corruption is one of the most dangerous ills of any society because like a deadly virus it attacks the vital structures that makes for society’s progressive functioning, putting its very existence into serious peril (Ihionkhan and Okpamen, 2007). Political aspirants lobby to obtain and secure party tickets to run for offices, and only those with well enough financial weight and influence scale through this point, while the less fortunate ones are left behind. A practical case of this is the case of Tony Elumelu, the governorship aspirant in Delta State for 2015 general elections. Top-ranking members of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) demanded and collected ₦750 million from the governorship aspirant. It was learnt that Ndudi Elumelu and House Health Committee Chairman, reportedly gave the money for ticket bribe. Elumelu had petitioned the EFCC, asking it to move in and recover the huge sum from Mr. Dumebi Kachikwu, the prime suspect and other PDP top officials, who are members of the PDP National Working Committee (NWC). Kachikwu had made very useful information on how the money was received and shared to the beneficiaries. He had demanded and collected the sum with a promise to use it and influence top ranking Wadatta House members in securing the PDP governorship ticket for him. He lamented that having given the suspect the money; he failed to secure the Delta State governorship ticket for him and did not also refund the huge amount to him, making him to suffer double jeopardy in the process (Soni, 2015).

Public offices in Nigeria can be likened to commodity that is being bought and sold. When succeeding to office cost a fortune, one would expect such an individual not to only recoup backlog of debt incurred on ground of electoral expenses, but also accumulate resources via the incumbency power or control of state resources to guarantee and secure future political representation. Incumbent parties take advantage of resources attached to their offices in support of their campaign (Isekhure, 2010:215), and therefore have an edge over others that do not have their hands on public funds.

The predominance of money in Nigerian politics cannot be over-emphasized and that also accounts for the huge negative impact it has made on our polity. Politics of cash and carry and winner-takes-it-all cannot generate development in its diverse manifestations despite how long we practice this brand of democracy; where political groups and individual with the highest financial power carry the day. During electioneering campaign in 2003; a group of business people under the aegis of Corporate Nigeria contributed over 2billion Naira to the campaign funds of President Olusegun Obasanjo in contravention of Section 38 Subsections 2 of the Companies and Allied Matters Act which prohibits corporate bodies from making contributions to political parties (Oji, *et al.* 2014). One would want to ask if such contribution is

purely on charitable grounds, or it is an outlet that must yield gains either in policy influence or direct cash flow.

Political parties ought to be critical actors in any political system, where they are to contribute major inputs into the socio-economic and political process and constitute a significant platform for unifying the various cleavage groups and mobilization towards national goals and offer direction for government, performing the vital task of steering the ship of state (Ikelegbe, 1988; Hague and Harrop, 2004: 185). Being bereft of integrated ideas and goals of governance, parties have lacked legitimate means of generating income and have relied on corrupt deals, flagrant extortions and contributions from their members in governance (Ikelegbe, 2013:342; Akubo and Yakubu, 2014). Unfortunately, parties are losing relevance with the absence of party discipline in virtually all the existing political parties which can be linked to the influence of money in politics. Consider for instance the upsurge of campaign organizations for candidates spread across the country running parallel structures with political parties. This development has weakened party discipline as candidates see themselves as financiers of their election, who just used the party as a platform to contest election (Adeyi, 2008). The trend today where sources of funding for parties and candidates campaigns cannot be tracked or recorded because of abuse and misuse has implications for election-related conflicts that may escalate into serious violence and threaten national security (Adetula and Sha, 2006). Evidently, the condition of the parties, in a political system, is the best possible evidence of the nature of any democratic regime (Anifowoshe, 2004:59).

Political Nomadism is the order of the day and this represents the defection(s) or arbitrary movement of politicians from one political party to another, or their formation of completely new party, after dumping their original party of membership (Akubo and Yakubu, 2014), (when they perceive their success in those parties is bleak) or on grounds of lack of internal democracy. The defection is termed nomadic because they have turn political parties into grazing grounds (Akubo and Yakubu, 2014).

In Nigeria today, sponsorship of a political party or candidate is effectively a business investment, which the investor must recoup the moment his candidate gets into public office. The very peculiar nature of Nigeria's socioeconomic environment characterized by hunger and literacy make the electors and indeed government agencies susceptible to manipulation by corrupt politicians who take advantage of inadequate electoral laws which creates a leeway to unlimited access to political finance sufficient to destroy the electoral process (Eme and Anyadike, 2014).

Conclusion

The cost of mounting the podium of governance for elective public offices in Nigeria is high and inimical to democratic consolidation as well as detrimental to the attainment of good governance aspiration. The principles of governance in the Fourth Republic have been upheld in its breach in diverse manifestations as one regime changes to another. Such ills are corruption in public offices, bad governance and recycled underdevelopment, leadership ineptitude, huge cost of governance, the slaughter of merit and entronement of mediocrity as well as narrowing of the prospects of political participation etc.

It is high time political parties acted above board as bearers of a nation's democracy as much is expected of them both in practice and in character. The role they play are crucial to democratic consolidation and therefore they must dissuade from all such characters that are inimical to electoral integrity and play a positive role that is in compliance with the dictates of electoral stability and democratic success in Nigeria. They must return to being that strong institution that provides a vital platform by which citizens can aggregate their interests, make policies and hold government accountable. This motive can be celebrated when money decreasingly becomes a driving force that determines political outcomes, but guard with sufficient ideological depth and service oriented approach to politics. Vision, principles and ideology must form the basis for which power is pursued. With this, they can remain that ideal vehicle for the representation of the political demands and aspirations of Nigerians. An attempt to manage and regulate the cost of attaining offices will be an outstretched arm to sanitizing the system of its overbearing corrupt

practices in diverse manifestations, owing to the fact that the phenomenon is a root cause of why diverse manner of political insanity continues to thrive. This thesis is a clarion call for the need to move from the politics of money and materialism to politics of ideas, issues and development.

Recommendations

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should wake-up to its statutory responsibilities to regulate party and campaign finance as well as step up capacity to ensure parties keep adequate records and accountability of their financial spending which would further be submitted to the electoral management body at the stipulated time. This will go a long way to maintain adherence to the laws guiding electoral financing in Nigeria. The enforceability of electoral laws is crucial to the maintenance of sanity in political finance in Nigeria. The amounts of individual and corporate donations to political parties must be within the ambience of the law. Appropriate measures must be put in place for checks and control and penalties for defaulters made stiffened. These regulations would allow for an even playing field in election contests.

The need for stable source of income for parties such as membership dues and subscription will encourage stakeholders to be endeared to their party and guard against its unwholesome hijack by a few business moguls whose political credentials are rather unclear. Increased and prompt payment of government grant to eligible political parties for electioneering so as to reduce the financial burden on them particularly the financially weak ones to enable them function appropriately is imperative. This would not only serve as a form of assistance to weak parties but reduce their reliance on individual and corporate donations.

The need for party finance reform to curb financial indiscipline among political parties is canvassed. The excessive party financial demands on aspirants must be checked, to dissuade the imposition of outrageous fees on candidates. The mandatory fee for party nomination form should be abolished as well as other outrageous levies such as payments for delegates as these are some of the causes of party financial exuberance and burden on candidates. Furthermore, political parties and the role they play are crucial to democratic consolidation and therefore they must dissuade from all such characters that are inimical to electoral integrity and play a positive role that is in compliance with the dictates of electoral stability and democratic success in Nigeria. Parties aiming to capture and control power and candidates vying for political positions must dissuade and detach from the influence of 'godfathers' (political investors). When political parties cohabit with these individuals with ulterior motives they become more of a democratic liability than prime mover for its sustenance.

Advocacy as well as public awareness and orientation on the dangers of monetizing the political landscape would keep the populace on alert and further make them watchers and monitors of trends that tilt in the direction of such mercantilism. Such public sensitization for awareness against the danger and slavery of having ones vote sold must be persistently canvassed. Reason being that the vital and uncompromising tool that determines the change of power or rotation in government in a democratic dispensation resides with the governed, which is their treasured mandate that must be guarded jealously. No pay is commensurable to the long term benefits of reserving the prerogative for decision making, checks and control in and beyond the electoral system through the 'expensive' instrumentality of the electorate mandate. It is a truism that the leaders are restrained less by the laws and regulations and more by the character of those they lead.

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APPENDIX (Statistical Demonstration)

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS BY SEX

Proposition One: The cost of elective public offices affects recruitment and undermines democratic consolidation

Hypothesis One

H₀: There is no association between the sex of the respondents and their opinion that the cost of elective public offices affects recruitment and undermines democratic consolidation.

H_R: There is an association between the sex of the respondents and their opinion that the cost of elective public offices affects recruitment and undermines democratic consolidation.

Table 1: Opinion of respondents on the cost of elective public offices affects recruitment and undermines democratic consolidation by sex.

SEX DISTRIBUTION

Responses	Male	Female	Total
Agree	240	227	467
Disagree	8	13	21
Total	248	240	488

Source: 2015 field work

$$X^2 = \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

Where f_o = observed frequencies
f_e = expected frequencies

COMPUTATION OF X²(Chi-square)

Cells	f _o	f _e	f _o - f _e	(f _o - f _e) ²	$\frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$
A	240	237.33	2.67	7.129	0.030
B	227	229.67	-2.67	7.129	0.032
C	8	10.67	-2.67	7.129	0.668
D	13	10.33	2.67	7.129	0.690
				X ²	1.42

Degree of freedom (X²)

$$df = (r-1) (c-1)$$

$$= (2-1) (2-1)$$

$$(1) (1) = 1$$

Research Decision

Calculated $X^2 = 1.42$
 Critical $X^2 = 1.64$ (from X^2 table)
 $df = 1$
 $\alpha = .20$

Research Result

Calculated $X^2 < \text{Critical } X^2 @ \alpha .20$
 \therefore Data are not statistically significant @ 20% sampling error. This means that we should reject H_R and accept H_0 .

Interpretation

There is no association between the sex of the respondents and their opinion that the cost of elective public offices affects recruitment and undermines democratic consolidation

Proposition Two: The cost of elective public offices pose higher cost to governance and affects negatively its developmental trajectory.

Hypothesis Two

H₀: There is no association between the sex of the respondents and their opinion that the cost of elective public offices poses higher cost to governance and affects negatively its developmental trajectory.

H_R: There is an association between the sex of the respondents and their opinion that the cost of elective public offices poses higher cost to governance and affects negatively its developmental trajectory.

Table 2: Opinion of respondents on the cost of elective public offices pose higher cost to governance and affects negatively its developmental trajectory.

SEX DISTRIBUTION

Responses	Male	Female	Total
Agree	200	155	355
Disagree	48	85	133
Total	248	240	488

Source: 2015 field work

COMPUTATION OF X^2

Cells	f_o	f_e	$f_o - f_e$	$(f_o - f_e)^2$	$\frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$
A	200	180.41	19.59	383.77	2.13
B	155	174.59	-19.59	383.77	2.20

C	48	67.59	-19.59	383.77	5.68
D	85	65.41	19.59	383.77	5.87
				X ²	15.88

Degree of freedom (X²)

$$df = (r-1) (c-1)$$

$$= (2-1) (2-1)$$

$$(1) (1) = 1$$

Research Decision

Calculated X² = 15.88
 Critical X² = 10.83 (from X² table)
 df = 1
 α = .001

Research Result

Calculated X² > Critical X² @ α .001
 ∴ Data are statistically significant @ less than 1% sampling error. This means that H_R is accepted while H₀ is rejected.

There is an association between the sex of the respondents and their opinion that the cost of elective public offices poses higher cost to governance and affects negatively its developmental trajectory.

Degree of Association

$$\text{Yule's (Q)} = \frac{ad-bc}{ad+bc} = \frac{(200)(85) - (155)(48)}{(200)(85) + (155)(48)}$$

$$= \frac{17000 - 7440}{17000 + 7440} = \frac{9560}{24440} = 0.39$$

There is a large positive relationship between the sex of the respondents and their opinion that the cost of elective public offices poses higher cost to governance and affects negatively its developmental trajectory.

Interpretation

The males are more likely to respond that the cost of elective public offices poses higher cost to governance and affects negatively its developmental trajectory than the females. Conversely, the females are less likely to respond that the cost of elective public offices poses higher cost to governance and affects negatively its developmental trajectory than the males.

Proposition Three: The cost of elective public offices impacts negatively on the ethical consideration of the individuals seeking office.

Hypothesis Three

H₀: There is no association between the sex of the respondents and their opinion that the cost of elective public offices impacts negatively on the ethical consideration of the individuals seeking office.

H_R: There is an association between the sex of the respondents and their opinion that the cost of elective public offices impacts negatively on the ethical consideration of the individuals seeking office.

Table 3: Opinion of respondents on the cost of elective public offices impacts negatively on the ethical consideration of the individuals seeking office.

SEX DISTRIBUTION

Responses	Male	Female	Total
Yes	46	152	198
No	202	88	290
Total	248	240	488

Source: 2015 field work

COMPUTATION OF X²

Cells	f _o	f _e	f _o - f _e	(f _o - f _e) ²	$\frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$
A	46	100.62	-54.62	2.98	29.65
B	152	97.38	54.62	2.98	30.64
C	202	147.38	54.62	2.98	20.24
D	88	142.62	-54.62	2.98	20.92
				X ²	101.45

Degree of freedom (X²)

$$df = (r-1) (c-1)$$

$$= (2-1) (2-1)$$

$$(1) (1) = 1$$

Research Decision

Calculated X² = 101.45
 Critical X² = 10.83
 df = 1
 α = .001

Research Result

Calculated X² > Critical X² @ α .001
 ∴ Data are statistically significant @ less than 1% sampling error. This means that H_R will be accepted while H₀ is rejected.

There is an association between the sex of the respondents and their opinion that the cost of elective public offices impacts negatively on the ethical consideration of the individuals seeking office.

Degree of Association

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Yule's (Q)} &= \frac{ad-bc}{ad+bc} = \frac{(46)(88) - (152)(202)}{(46)(88) + (152)(202)} \\ &= \frac{4048 - 30704}{4048 + 30704} = \frac{26656}{34752} = 0.77 \end{aligned}$$

There is a very large positive relationship between the sex of the respondents and their opinion that the cost of elective public offices impacts negatively on the ethical consideration of the individuals seeking office.

Interpretation

The males are more likely to respond that the cost of elective public offices impacts negatively on the ethical consideration of the individuals seeking office than the females. Conversely, the females are less likely to respond that the cost of elective public offices impacts negatively on the ethical consideration of the individuals seeking office than the males.