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GENDER, POLITICAL AMBITION AND THE LOW REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN KOGI STATE PARLIAMENT

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Abstract
Discussions on the barriers to women's participation in Nigerian politics and Kogi state in particular has largely focused on external constraints, which impedes their capacity to run for . political offices. This paper on the other hand examines internal constraints such as low –self –political efficacy among women as a major factor creating an ambition gap between the genders in the State. This is with the view to unraveling the reasons behind the invisibility of women in Kogi state Parliament; an issue which necessitated the current state Governor Yahya Bello to lobby the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) to nominate women as running mates for candidates in local government chairpersons' election. On that note, a cross sectional survey was conducted between November 2019 and August 2022 in the 3 senatorial district in the state. . Questionnaires were administered and interviews with key informants conducted to elicit the data needed for the study. The results that emerged showed that there is a gender gap in political ambition in the state. The gender gap persisted even when control for education, professions that produces eligible candidates for office and marital status were introduced; suggesting that the political ambition gap between the genders is a major factor responsible for women low representation in Kogi state Assembly. The paper concludes that low representation of women in Kogi state parliament is not just the result of the socio-cultural and religions factors, but also an issue of low self-political efficacy among women. It recommends that lectures and workshops should be conducted to train and build women's self-confidence to aspire and run for office.
Keywords: *Gender; Political Ambition; Kogi State; Parliament*

Introduction

Political ambition 'understood here as the desire to run for political office' (Schlesinger, 1966) is the bed rock of modern representative democracy. Citizens from every group in a nation state need someone to express their views and opinion in their national and local assemblies. But in a situation where people from different groups are not equally represented as a result of their low- self- political efficacy, a political ambition gap exists. In the same vein, the inequality that arises between the sexes as a result of the lack of interest to run for office by either of them is known as a gender gap in political ambition.

Political ambition gap between the genders has attracted the interest of gender specialists and development agencies alike. This concern grew out of the continues underrepresentation of women in political positions and the inability of previous theories to provide a valid

explanation. Whereas earlier research Lawless &Fox (2004); Lee (2010); Clack (1994) in their ' pipeline thesis' had hypothesized that gender equality in the pool of eligible candidate, (those with requisite professional experiences, like lawyers and the corporate executives) would lead to gender parity in elected office; much is yet to be achieved.

The central idea of the pipeline argument holds that the more women are positioned in careers that lead to political candidacies, the more women will acquire the qualification and experiences to occupy political positions. In their study, Lee (2010) and Clack (1994) posited that "women are not found in professions which politicians are inordinately chosen from'. These translate to mean that women's low representation in politics was as a result of external factors that could be corrected once women take up such professional jobs.

But as the gender gap continued in spite the increase of the number of female lawyers and other professions that were considered to be the pipeline for political position, the desire for further explanation becomes necessary. Some of such studies which attempted to fill in the gap were those previously conducted by Lawless and Fox (2001,2011). Their findings showed that prospective female candidates were 16% points less likely than their male counterparts to even consider running for office in the USA (59%-43% in 2001 and 62%-46% in 2011).

In Nigeria on the other hand, research has shown that certain cultural values have systematically over the years impeded the female gender from participating in politics. Scholars like Agbalajobi (2010) have unveiled the travail of the female gender, such as humiliation, manipulation and marginalization through a culturally biased norms and practices in all spheres of life in the country. However, the Nigerian woman has overcome most of these barriers as they are now taking up those pipe line professions like lawyers, CEOs and politics that were not 'fit' for women culturally before now.

For instance, the president of the Nigerian Barr Association (NBA) while presenting a paper in the International Women's Day 2018 stated that the country had 49,850 verified practicing lawyers out of which 14,647 or 29% were females. He also noted that female students' enrolment in many Nigerian universities had reached numerical parity or even surpassed their male counterparts. In spite of all these achievements, women in the country are yet to meet up with the Beijing 35% female representation in the country's parliament.

Kogi state in particular is lagging behind other states in the federation as there is presently no female representatives in the State House of Assembly. Although past governments in the state have shown interest in women development and empowerment, but giving women appointive position may not actually satisfy their yearnings for active political participation. Even some strong female political contenders like Hajiya Halima Abubakar Audu, late Chief Mrs. Comfort Aiyekpeku, amongst others who had contested elections and held political positions at various levels on different parties have one negative story or the other to tell.

However, their stories are not different from that of Barrister Natasha Akpoti who in spite all the humiliations she suffered, has not bowed out of politics, suggesting that it is more of self-determination. This paper therefore investigates the gender gap in political ambition in the Kogi state.

The section that follows this introduction gives a conceptual clarification of political ambition and theoretical framework, while the next section is on the methodology. This followed by the presentation of data and its analyses and subsequently the findings and recommendation.

Conceptual Clarification and Theoretical Framework

Political Ambition

Political ambition basically entails the desire of those who do not hold office to vie for one, or for officeholders to contest for a higher position. Having ambition which is the desire to contest an election, is the necessary step towards candidacy, but what is found in most political ambition literature concerns the concept of progressive ambition. In this vain, Schlesinger (1966) identified two types of ambition such as the ordinary ambition and progressive ambition among those holding political positions. He noted that democratically-elected politicians are accountable to citizens mostly because they are ambitious to remain in their political position, or, if conditions are right, they move to the next highest position available to them. As such, incumbents in most countries are more likely to have the second type of ambition which gives them the progressive desire to establish a political career than those who have never held any political office.

The concept of progressive political ambition in this instance focuses on current office holders and assumes that once an individual has achieved an elected position, he or she will aspire to a higher office. However, explaining the concept of ambition from Schlesinger point of view may not capture the early stages of the candidate emergence process. That is, to fully understand the decision involved in moving from political aspirant to candidates to holding elective positions, it is necessary to assess ambition from its first stage of development or general interest in considering the issue of candidacy (Fox & Lawless, 2005; Barber, 1965)

According to Fox & Lawless (2011), this particular phase of the development of political ambition occurs before the actual decision to enter a specific race, even takes place. This is so because if the idea of contesting for office never really occurs to an individual, then he/she will never be in a position to assess a specific political opportunity. But nascent ambition is also influenced by certain cultural and religious norms. Fox &Lawless (2004) posit that nascent ambition is also influenced by factors such as a politicized upbringing, race, sex, religious and ethnic factors, each of which falls outside of the political opportunity structure.

Even in Schlesinger's original conception of political ambition, it was made clear that ambition for office, like other ambitions, develops with a specific situation, that it is a response to the possibilities which lie before a person. As a result, before concluding that one gender has nascent or progressive ambition, we should consider issue like values and expectation and other issues that lie before the man or the woman. Do men and women have different values and expectations when it comes to their desire to run for office? Both of them are more likely to pursue an activity if they expect to do well and value that activity. For the purpose of this paper, political ambition is the desire to run for office which in turn, is influenced by so many factors such as perception of competence.

The Expectancy- Value Theory

Expectancy- Value Theory has a long history in psychology and especially in the achievement motivation field, where Jacquelyn Eccles and her colleagues have contributed a lot. This contribution is reflected in some of their recent studies, particularly in their research on how expectancies, values and their determinants, influences choice, persistence and performance. They argued that achievement-related choices are motivated by a combination of people's expectations for successes and subjective task value in particular domains (Eccles *et al*, 1983; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). As such, individuals are more likely to pursue an activity if they expect to do well and they value such task.

Lewin (1938) had earlier discussed how the value of an activity influences its importance to the individual, while Tolman (1936) explains how expectancies for success

functions as motivation in deferent areas of life. Such explanation was further captured by Higgins (2007) who initially defined values in terms of the relative worth of a commodity or an activity, but later modified it when he presented it as the psychological experiences of being attracted or repulsed by an activity. Thus valuing something, means wishing to attain, and for Higgins (2007), value is a motivational force and not just a belief.

This model was adopted by Eccles & Harold (1991) to advance our understanding of gender differences in choices of particular activities like sports and other skills, where they concluded that expectancy could also be influenced by other factors. Issues such as perception of competence, perception of the difficulty of the different task, individual goals, and self-schema along with their affective memories for different achievement related events were found to be vital by them. They view expectancies for success as individual`s beliefs about how well they will do on an upcoming task which is based on the individual's assessment of their own ability and how they think they compare to others values, with respect to the qualities of different tasks and how those qualities influence the individuals desire to do the task; hence the term task value (Eccles & Harold, 1991)

These values are themselves subjective because various individual assign different values to the same activity. In particular, women and men tend to value certain activities more than the other based on their perception of the worth of the tasks. Men tend to value activities that align with their masculine nature, which some considers to be subjective. For instance, the popular myth which is often used to explain the shortage of women in politics such as not being "man enough for the job "assigns masculinity to partisan politics. But a study of parliamentary candidates carried out for Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) in Britain in 2001 by MORI Social Research Institute, however revealed that such myth is subjective. The findings from the study suggest that while male and female potential candidates had the same levels of political experiences, but yet fewer women were selected for winnable seats in every political party. www.ipsos.com, accessed 29th august 2022

Women were not selected because they were not qualified for the job but because the principle of 'man enough' was applied. Such factors make the job less valuable to most women since the motivational force which is a favorable environment and not just a belief that it a man's job is absent. It furthers lowers their expectation in the political sphere, specifically tampering with their perception of competence while highlighting the difficulty of the task, making it less attractive to women. Consequently, the value attached to politics by women, coupled with their low expectation for success in elections, affects their desire to run for offices. Those affective memories therefore impede their likelihood to develop a progressive ambition as in the case of Kogi State where strong political contenders like Hajiya Halima Abubaker Audu, later chief Mrs. comfort Aiyekpeku, amongst others bowed out of politics.

On the other hand, there are female candidates like Barrister Natasha Akpoti who in spite humiliation and unfriendly environment in Kogi state, have remain resilient and even more persistence because of the values they place on politics. In this regards some women just like men's expectancies for success in politics is based on their assessment of their own ability and how they think they can compete in politics.

Objectives of the Study

The overall goal of the study is to assess the relationship between the gender gap in political ambition and the low representation of women in the Kogi State parliament. While the specific objectives include among others:

a, To investigate if there is a gender gap in political ambition in Kogi state.

b. To unravel whether the gender gap in political ambition is responsible for the low representation of women in Kogi State House of Assembly.
c. To investigate if those who have held political positions are most likely to seek higher positions .

Methodology

Although studies on gender and political ambition are usually analyzed quantitatively, this research adopts a combination of both the quantitative and qualitative research since this is more likely to broaden our understanding of the subject matter. In this vain, the semi-structure interviews employed, will throw more light on issues that were not explicit enough from data collected from questionnaire. Both primary and secondary data were collected from the three senatorial districts in the state.

A purposive sampling method was adopted in part to include those from professions which the pipeline thesis had hypothesized that it was most liked to produce potential female candidates. Other members of the sample population were drawn from the general public to include market women. On the other hand, key informants were drown from the two major political parties namely the All Progressives (APC), and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and some INEC officials. On that note, one woman leader from each of the two major political parties and female politicians as well as an INEC interviewee were added to compliment the 21 questionnaires that were administered in the 2 senatorial districts plus 20 in the last one.

To protect the identity of study participants, each interviewee was given a pseudonym. In addition, no specific identifying information is linked to qualitative comments. Finally, without compromising the integrity of the data some details may be slightly changed in the discussion of findings to maintain anonymity. Data that was collected from the interviews were thematically analyzed while those from the questionnaires were descriptively analyzed to determine the gender gap in political ambition.

Demographic data of population and the study area

1. **The study area**; the area under study is part of the 21 local government areas in Kogi State which is further divided into 3 Senatorial Districts; Kogi East, Kogi West, and Kogi Central. The researchers picked one local government area from each of the 3 senatorial districts; Ajeokuta in Kogi Central, Idah in Kogi east and Kabba-Bunu in Kogi West

2**. Demographic data of population**; an overview of demographic characteristics of the sixty two respondents in the three senatorial districts. The ages of those who returned the questionnaires ranged from 18 to 59 years. 18% of the respondents were between the ages of 18-28 years, 31% of the responds are within the age bracket of 29-38 years, and those within the age bracket of 39-48 years accounted for 31% of the respondents also. Respondents who were aged 49-58 years made up 16% of those who filled the questionnaires, while 59 and above accounted for 4% of the respondents. Therefore, the area of study was dominated by responds that fell within the age bracket of 29-38 years and 39-48 years.

From the sex distribution of respondent, 34% that is 21 individuals were male while 66% or 41 persons were female. On educational qualification, we had 5 postgraduate respondent (8%) out of which 2 or(approximately 3%) were women. Among the 16(26%) B.sc/B.A holders, 10 person or (16%) of the population were woman, out of the 26(42%) of the respondents with either OND/ND/NCE 18(30%) were women and the remaining 8(12) were male. At lower level, 15 respondents (24) had SSCE certificates of which women were 11(18%) of the population.

In order to examine if the pipeline hypothesis is still relevant we took into consideration those professions which they had argued that it was a factor for candidacy. Therefore we identified 8 lawyers (13%) of the population out of which 4(6%) were women. Of the 26(42) of respondents that were business men and women 10(16%) were women even though they were owners of small businesses. However those graduates that were business men were mostly in the category of the male gender. While those in partisan politics were mostly men 3 persons out the 4.

Data presentation and analyses

The preparation of questionnaires were guided by two basic assumptions which include; 1, There are some links between, Low self- political- efficacy , gender gap and the low representation of women in Kogi State House of Assembly . 2. External constraints contributes a lot for the zero presences of women in Kogi State House of Assembly. 3. Those who have held political positions are most likely to seek higher positions if they are ambitious.

On this note 8 questions were raised in the questionnaires, These include: 1. Are you interested in politics,(yes) (No) If no, chose one of the following . a, I don't just have the interest; b, politics in kogi is dirty; c, don't have the resources; d, don't have the qualification, No.2. Do you think that your gender is a barrier to a career in politics. 3. Have you ever had the desire to run for a political position? 4 . would you consider yourself as qualify and capable to run for office in your locallyty?.5. Do you currently or have ever held any elective post in your senatorial district ? if you have held political position before were you (a) defeated or(b) you just bowed out of politics? 6. If given the opportunity would you vie for any political position?7. Do you think it is appropriate /right for women to vie for political positions? 8. Do you know of any policy in Nigeria that discourages women from participating in politics? .

Question. No 1. Are you interested in politics,(yes) (No) If no, chose one of the following a, I don't just have the interest; b, politics in kogi is dirty; c, don't have the resources; in response to question one, 36(58%) said no, while 26( ) persons said yes. Majority of those who responded negatively were women 31(50%) and among them,12(19%) went for option a, 11(18%) went for option c, 7(11%)persons selected option b, while the last person among them did not choose any option. Among the male respondents, 3(5%) selected option b, 2(3%) selected option c and 1( ) went option a. Among those that answered in affirmative 16 (26%), were male and 10(16%) were female.

No.2. Do you think that your gender is a barrier to a career in politics. From the data that were returned, 10(16%) of the respondent said yes out of which 7(11%) were women and 3(5%) of the total population were men. 52(84%) disagreed out of which 27% were male while females were57%. From the data presented more women than men believe that gender is an issue a determinant of their participation in politics.

No 3. Have you ever had the desire to run for a political position? Out of the 26(42%) of the respondents who had the interest to run for office, 16(26%) were men while 10 (16%) were women. Among the 36(59%) who never had the desire to contest an election, 31(50%) were female while 5(8%) of the respondents were male. From the presentation, it is obvious that there is a gender gap in political ambition as the majority of women agreed that they do not have the desire to run for office

No. 4. Would you consider yourself qualified and capable to run for political position in your locality? 38(61%) of the respondents had law self-perception of their electoral viability. Out of these, 20(32%) while 18(29%) of those that agreed were female . On the other hand 24(39%) individuals saw themselves as not being capable or qualified. These were mostly women 23(38%) with just a single man. Judging from the data presented and analyzed

descriptively in numbers one and two, there is s low-self political efficacy among women. This issue was found even among some women who were in professions considered to be the pipeline jobs for political candidacy, i.e. 2 lawyers 10 businesswomen and 2 personal aids to politicians .

No.5. **Do you currently hold or have held any political position in your locality or even at the federal level?** I4 (23%) among respondents who agreed were male, while there were only 3 (5%) females. Judging from their responses most women are not currently or had held political positions. This suggests that there is likely to be a gender gap in progressive political ambition in the study area.

No. 6. If given the opportunity would you vie for any political position? 30 (48%) of the respondents said yes out of which 20(32%) were male while female were 10(16%). Those who said no were 32(54%) out of which women were 31(50%), while there was just one man. In essence, more women were unlikely to vie for political offices in the state even when they are given the opportunity.

7. Do you think it is appropriate /right if political parties are lobbied to nominate women to vie for office? 44(71%) of the respondents said yes out of which 34(55%) were women and 10 (16%) were men while among the 18 (29%) of the said no were mostly men 11(18%) while women were 7 (11%). Judging from this analysis, the area is dominated by women who considered that lobbing for the nomination of women is appropriate. Reasons or explanation of why the men in the study did not agree to the above is not explicit, the interview will throw more light on it.

8. Do you know of any policy in Nigeria that discourages women from participating in politics? 50 (81%) of the respondents said NO out of which 21% were male while 60% were women. 12 (19%) of the study population agreed that certain policies in Nigeria encourage women participation, out of which 8(12%) were males. From this data, it can be deduced that there are more women in the study area that are not aware of any policy that discourages them from politics.

Sources field work 2019

Qualitative data presentation and analysis

Five themes emerged from those interviewed. Those themes that resonated most frequently are reported first. The themes include

1. Women's desire to vie for political positions.
2. Low political ambition is reason why there are no women in Kogi state parliament in the present dispensation.
3. Factors that may have been responsible for the low political ambition
4. External constraints to women representation in Kogi state parliament
5. policies in Nigeria that could discourage women from participating in politics

While these five themes clearly emerged from conversations with the interviewees, it is important to note that opinions varied among the six of them. For instance 3 of the women interviewed all agreed that women in Kogi state has the desire to run for political positions, but some of them are more articulate in discussing the subject matter than others. While they all gave YES answer to the question "do women in Kogi state have the desire to vie for political positions", Mrs. Woman affairs included the phrase that "although they are not many" similarly Mrs. Senior advisers said "yes, I do women definitely have the desire to come out for political positions, although they are not 'much' = many"

Theme 1: Women's desire to vie for political positions. The first theme, and the strongest, to emerge when discussing the relationship between women low political ambition and

their absence in Kogi state parliament was; 'Women's desire to vie for office'. The following are narratives or quotes that will help us to understand their opinions better.
When asked if women in the state have the interest in running for political offices. Mr. Exco said "yes, I think women have the desire to contest elections. You hear some women say they would like to come out for certain positions like senator. If they do not have the desire they will not imagine themselves in such key political positions". Mrs. Woman Affairs said "yes I do. Although they are not many, I know of 1 or 2 women who wanted to get ticket for a particular position. Even though they did not get it, the fact they came out means that they have the desire", Mrs. Senior Adviser also agreed, stating that "Yes, women definitely have the desire to come out for political positions, although they are not much" Mrs. Woman leader also agreed with the other interviewees that women do have the ambition but men in her constituency for instance, make the political environment unfriendly for women to even come out to declare their interest. This results in very few women indicating their interest.

Theme 2: Low political ambition is the reason why there are no women in Kogi state parliament in this present dispensation. The following are narratives or quotes that will help us to understand the above better. Mr. Exco 2 said "yes because even though women have the desire to vie for political office there is a big margin between men and women in parliament because few women actually contest elections. Thus, I believe that if political ambition is very high it will surely reflect in the representation of women in parliament. Thus, because it is very slim among women, it accounts further low Representation of women in Kogi House of Assembly". Mrs. Women Affairs noted that`` to some extent I'll say that low political ambition affects representation of Kogi state women because as I've mentioned before, not much women actually vie. Although they still come for political positions. However, I will not completely attribute it to political Ambition". Mrs. senior Adviser said ``yes political ambition is a major reason for low representation of Kogi state women in national assembly, as well as violence".

Theme 3. Factors that may be responsible for the low political ambition
Mr. Exco said "Religion, like Islam will not allow women to participate actively in such partisan politics, unless if the husband is in full support, thus limiting their desire. Some of their reproductive roles will not allow them to even nurture their desire as they will be busy tending to their family." According to Mrs. Women Affairs "the lack of political will is another challenge, to adoption policies like the quota system, also most women cannot come out because of religion and violence, while others feel they will not win when they are up against their male counterparts and then some because of financial cost or violence or just personal belief."
Mrs. Senior Adviser was more articulate stating that "violence accounts for the gap in political ambition. If women keep hearing the gruesome acts being committed during elections on in the election process or politics in general, their interest or desire to vie for office begins to diminish as they still have family to take care of" "Moreover they do not see it as a do or die affair or with the attitude that most men carry during politics" Mrs. Woman leader stated that "some of the women are not just serious about the whole thing they will declare their interest resister and come for primaries with the intention of stepping dawn for another candidate"

Theme 4. External constraints that may also affect women representation in Kogi state parliament. With regards to theme 4, the following are narratives or quotes that will help

us to understand the above better. Mr. Exco stated that "as I said before, religion, violence and tradition" according to Mrs. Woman Affairs, "lack of support from political parties. For example I wanted to contest for a particular position and my party was even happy that a woman was coming out. All of a sudden I saw that they went behind my back and gave the ticket to man, so I did not have the support from my party and so many other women are also suffering from this". Mrs. Senior Adviser on her part, made emphases the issue of violence as a major constraint to female representation.

Theme 5, policies in Nigeria that could discourage women from participating in politics. An INEC Official, 1.stated that "regarding women participation in elections in Nigeria and Kogi by extension is constitutionally guaranteed as provided in the Electoral Act. Consequently, there is no gender discrimination. Accordingly, women are good to go. They may however need to be courageous given the violence associated with Kogi elections." INEC Official, 2, Noted that there are no policies in Nigeria and Kogi as well, that could discourage women from participating in politics. He mentioned the current candidates who have emerged in their various parties such as (Natasha Adiza Akpoti, of the Peoples Democratic Party, contesting for a senatorial position, Hon Ladi Adamu under the Action People Party, vying for a seat in the House of Representatives, similarly Sarah Paul of Action Peoples Party was also cleared for the same position. Two female candidates were also cleared for the State House of Assembly, Bummi Funke from the New Nigeria Peoples Party and Comfort Ojoma Nwuchi on the platform of the All Progressives Congress. "I don't think they would have been cleared if there were discriminatory laws, the rule of the game applies to both genders" On her part, Mrs. Woman Leader, stated that the governor has lobbied political parties to nominate at least one female candidates in Federal Constituencies and/or Senatorial Districts to encourage women in the state.
Sources field work June, 2019-september 22

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data gotten from the questionnaire showed a slight difference between the genders with regards to their interest in running for political offices. Out of the 26(42%) of respondents who indicated that they have interest in vying for office, 16(26%) were men while 10 (16%) were female, this is in spite the fact that there were more women in the study population. This gap persisted even among those respondents that were considered eligible for candidacy by proponents of the pipeline line thesis. The qualitative data further affirms this when three of the interviews stated that few women do have the interest to run for office in the state.

Secondly, data from the questionnaire showed that low political ambition is the reason why there are no women in Kogi state parliament in this present dispensation. For instance when asked If respondents Would consider themselves qualified and capable to run for political position in their locality, had more than halve of the study population affirming to that. 38(61%) of the respondents who saw themselves as qualified and capable to vie for a political position. Out of these, 20(32%) were male while 18 (29%) of those that agreed were females. This issue was supported by data from our interview where three of interviewees argued that Low political ambition is the reason why there are no women in Kogi state parliament in this present dispensation. Another respondent noted that "some of the women are not just serious about the whole thing they will declare their interest resister and come for primaries with the intention of stepping dawn for another candidate" This shows a low-salve political -efficacy on the part of such women.

However to understand these, the Expectancy- Value theory was used to explain why qualify women would see themselves as not being qualified for political positions. The theory does suggest that these set of women do not place any value on politics or that the hostile political environment that is characterized by violence in the state lowers their expectations in elections outcome or even internal party politics. An interviewee for instance narrated her experience thus "I wanted to contest for a particular position and my party was even happy that a woman was coming out. All of a sudden I saw that they went behind my back and gave the ticket to man, so I did not have the support from my party and so many other women are also suffering from this"

This woman's experience is not an isolated case as the quantitative data showed external constraints that may affect a woman's level competence in line with the Expectancy- Value theory such as financial cost, violence, lack of support from political parties, family/reproductive role. From the interview, the key informants corroborated the responses gotten from the questionnaire. Other external constraint like government policies which may impede women's capacity to contest elections was captured in the qualitative data. In this regard both interviewees for the Independent National Election Commission Noted that there are no policies in Nigeria and Kogi state by extension that discourages women from participating in politics.

Thus the above analyses therefore confirm our first basic number one which states that there is an interlink age between, Low self- political- efficacy, gender gap and the low representation of women in Kogi State House of Assembly

Summary

In the foregoing, this paper has examined literature on political ambition gap between the genders to understand the continued under representation of women in political positions and the inability of previous theories to provide a valid explanation. Whereas earlier research 'the pipeline thesis ' had hypothesized that gender equality in the pool of eligible candidate, (those with requisite professional experiences, like lawyers and the corporate executives) would lead to gender parity in elected office; much is yet to be achieved.

But as the gender gap continued in spite the increase of the number of female layers and other professions that were considered to be the pipeline for political position, the desire for further explanation becomes necessary. Some of such studies which attempted to fill in the gap were those previously conducted by Lawless and Fox in 2001 and the subsequent one in 2011 respectively. Their findings showed that prospective female candidates were 16% points less likely than their male counterparts to even consider running for office in the USA.(59%-43% in 2001 and 62%-46% in 2011).

Such empirical result necessitate the interrogation of links between, Low self- political-efficacy, gender gap and the low representation of women in Kogi State House of Assembly, while the study is anchored on the Expectancy- Value theory. The central idea of the theory is that Individuals are more likely to pursue an activity if they expect to do well and they value such task. In this regards women more likely to pursue political activities if they feel they competent and the assurance that will do well and that they value such task.

On that note a purposive sampling method was adopted in part to include those from professions which the pipeline thesis had hypothesized that it was most liked to produce potential female candidates. Other members of the sample population were drawn from the general public to include market women. On the other hand, key informants were drown from the two major political parties (the APC&PDP) and some INEC officials. On that note one woman leader from each of the two major political parties and female politicians as well as an

INEC interviewee were added to compliment the 21 questionaries' that were administers in the 2senatorial districts plus 20 in the last one.

Quantitative data was descriptively analyzed while interview scripts were thematically analyzed. Results that emerged showered that there is a gender gap in political ambition in the state, as there were more women than men who stated that the neither had the interest to run for office or felt that they were not capable to contest an election. Three of the interviewees further confirm this when the stated that Low political ambition is the reason why there are no women in Kogi state parliament in this present dispensation. Another respondent noted that some of the women are not just serious about the whole thing they will declare their interest resister and come for primaries with the intention of stepping dawn for another candidate, which was a sign to show that they had low self- political-efficacy**.**

Conclusion

From the data presentation and analyses in this paper it could be observed that there exists a political ambition gap between the genders. This gap persisted even when control for occupation (like lawyers, politicians and business CEOs) was introduced suggesting that there is a link between women's lack of interest to run for office and the under representation of women in Kogi state parliament. However, all hope is not lost as the Governor of the State, Alhaji Yahaya Bello has lobbied all political parties to include female candidates to as nominees at party primaries. It is hoped that the presence of an elected female office holder may serve as a role model in the state as suggested by Apine & Balogun (2019)

Recommendation

Beside the issue of low self-political efficacy among women, party recruitment and family obligations do matter, and contribute to decreasing women's political ambition to run for office. Therefore, both the family, the community and political parties as well as non-governmental organizations should work together to encourage women to take up elective positions. lectures and workshops should be conducted to train and build women' s confidence to aspire and run for office.

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