
**ASSESSING NIGERIAN TEACHERS' PARTICIPATION,
ATTITUDE AND PERCEPTION
OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE**

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to investigate the teachers' attitudes and perception of democratic governance as well as relationships among teachers' characteristics, democratic attitudes and perception. A self-designed questionnaire tagged democratic participation, attitude and perception was administered on a sample of six hundred and fifty (650) teachers were selected from sixty secondary schools across Lagos State. The data collected were analysed using percentage, mean, t-test, ANOVA, and correlation. The results indicated that teachers [participations in democratic process is low. But have positive democratic attitude and perception. education. The results – participation ($t=3.91$; $df = 598$; $P<.000$); and perception ($t = 3.43$; $df = 598$; $P<.01$), indicated that significant difference exist between male and female teachers' participation, and perception of democratic governance. Age, religion and teachers' education qualification all were found to be significantly differ in participation, attitudes and perception of democratic

governance. The findings further depicted a positive relationship between the characteristic's teachers' participation, attitudes and perception towards democratic governance. Based on the findings, it was recommended that teachers should be encouraged to be involve and participate in the democratic process.

Keywords: Democracy, attitudes, perception, governance, Nigerian Teachers.

Introduction

The past few years have witnessed a growing interest in countries and people aspiring for democratic governance globally especially among countries of in sub-Saharan Africa, many of whom have experienced political instability and under one form military rule or dictatorial regime before embracing democracy. There is also a growing body of evidence and proposition which has attributed the incessant military intervention and political crisis in most developing countries most especially in sub-Saharan Africa to the citizens' disposition toward democratic government (Arowolo, & Aluko, 2012; Nwogu, 2015; Odiri, 2019).

Over the past decade, many studies have been conducted to investigate public attitudes towards democracy especially in developing countries (Bradley, 2011; Logan, & Mattes, 2012; Ay^oe, 2018; Foa, Klassen, Slade, Rand, & Collins, 2020). These studies, in general, revealed dissatisfaction with democratic government. However, are not consistent in their findings of the influence of socio-demographic factors on attitude and perception towards democracy. For instance, Li, Tang, and Huhe (2016) used the Asian, Afro and Latino Barometer Surveys to examine the effect of democracy on individuals' perceptions of government corruption. It was reported democracy has different effects on citizens' perceptions of corruption. Citizens of countries with advance democracy perceive their governments to be more corrupt. Among the few studies carried out in Africa, are the Afrobarometer, cross-national survey research project, to assess citizens' perceptions of

governance issues and attitudes to democracy, markets and civil society in 18 African nations. Murtaza and Akbar (2019) study showed significant difference between male and female teachers' democratic practices; urban schools' teachers were more democratic when compared with rural schools' teachers. Khan and Khan (2020) study showed that Pakistanis' were not satisfied with the manner of democratic government in their country. They differ in attitudes towards democracy by income, education and gender.

Nigeria, sub-Saharan Africa's most populous country has a chequered political history. The country has experienced political crisis and instability since independence in 1960. It has been and still struggling to establish an enduring democratic government. Her several attempts to sustain and consolidate democratic government have faltered. Just five years after independence in 1960, her democratic rule collapsed, and was followed by 13 years of military rule. The military handed-over to a democratic government in 1979 which was another short-lived democratic experience spanning just four years (1979-1983). Again, to be followed by 16 straight years of military rule (1983-1999). Nigeria has had three decades under successive military rule and four transitions toward democracy in her almost sixty years as a sovereign country (1960, 1979, 1992 and 1999). Thus, it is an error of history and erroneous to refer to Nigeria's democratic system as "Nascent democracy", which interpreted to mean that democracy is new in Nigeria (Arowolo & Aluko, 2012; Ozohu-Suleiman, 2016; Osimen, Anegbode, Basil, & Oyewole, 2018).

It is almost two decades of the return to democratic government. While it is important to assess the impact of these changes on Nigerian politics, it is also important to study the attitudes of individuals toward democracy and their role in it. Our understanding of the underlying determinants of democratic attitudes and behaviour among Nigerians is limited. A number of studies have found strong association between socio-economic status and democratic attitudes (Adetoro & Omiyefa, 2017; Osimen, Anegbode, Basil, & Oyewole, 2018; Idike., Okeke., Okorie., Ogba, & Ugodulunwa, 2020). Teachers as change agent are not only important element within the formal educational system also in

the community has significant role to play in the promotion of democratic principles. Teachers' democratic attitudes and behaviours towards democratic governance are worthy of consideration for research. In a democratic country, formal education needs to be democratic for three reasons: democracy is a form of government, democracy is a lifestyle, and citizens have a right to join democratic life (Korkmaz & Erden, 2014). Consequently, the school as a social institution should promote and reinforce the democratic way of life. If the educational system is to assist in developing, democracy culture among the students, as change agent, teachers' attitudes and behaviours about democracy are important in this process. From available literature, little or no studies focused on teachers' democratic attitudes and behaviours. Thus, in the study, teachers participation, attitudes and perception of democratic government was investigated.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the secondary teachers' participation, attitudes and perception of democratic government in Nigeria. Specifically, the study: (i) describes the level of participation, attitudes and perception of democratic government of secondary school teachers; (ii) determines difference in participation, attitudes and perception of democratic government of secondary school teachers according to gender, age, religion, and educational qualification; and iii) explores the influence of gender, age, religion, education and participation, attitudes and perception of democratic government.

Research Questions

This study therefore asked these fundamental questions pertinent to the teachers in democratic consolidation:

1. What is level of political participation, attitudes and perception of Nigerians teachers to democracy and democratic governance?
2. Is there any significant difference between socio-

demographic characteristic of teachers and political participation, attitudes and perception of democracy and democratic governance?

3. What is the relationship between socio-demographic characteristic of teachers and political participation, attitudes and perception of democracy and democratic governance?

Methods

A total of 650 teachers from thirty secondary schools from three local government areas in Lagos State were surveyed. Ten secondary schools were randomly selected from the twenty local government areas in the State. The proportionate sampling technique was used to select the teachers from each of the selected secondary schools. On the average 15-20 teachers were selected from each school. Of the 650 questionnaire distributed, only 600 were returned and used in the analysis. Thirty questionnaires were not returned while twenty were not properly completed.

A structured questionnaire was designed based on insight from literature. The questionnaire titled teachers' attitudes and perception of democratic governance questionnaire has four parts – the first part seek information on teachers bio data, participation in democratic; and twelve items assessed the attitudes towards democratic governance and fifteen for the perception. All items were on 5-points Likert scale. A pilot study was conducted to determine the reliability coefficient using the Cronbach alpha which was found to be 0.87. The data were analysed using frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Other are t-test, ANOVA and correlation.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of participation, attitude and perception of teachers? The results of the question are summarized in Tables 1 to 3. First, we measured the level of political participation of the teachers.

Table 1: Participation of Democratic Government

| | Yes | No | Indiffe- rent |
|--|---------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Do you participate in the political activities in your area? | 210 (35.0) | 319 (53.2) | 71 11.8 |
| Do you register to vote during the last election? | 256 (42.7) | 261 (43.5) | 83 (13.8) |
| Did you vote in the last presidential and State election? | 233 (30.8) | 298 (54.7) | 69 (14.5) |
| Did you vote in the last general election? | 233 (38.8) | 298 (49.7) | 69 (11.5) |
| Are you a card carrying member of a political party? | 203 (33.8) | 397 (66.2) | - |

Table 1 indicates that only 35.0% of the respondents' participated in the political activities in their area, majority 53.2% did not while 11.8% are indifferent. Less than half of the respondents 42.7% claimed to have registered to vote, while 43.5% did not register to vote. However, one-third 30.8% and 38.8% respectively reported that they voted during the Presidential and State election and last general election of April 27, 2015 election, while majority that is 54.7% and 49.7% respectively did not vote during the election. The deduction from the results is a general political apathy and non-involvement in political activities by teachers in Nigeria.

Table 2: Attitudes towards Democracy

| | SA | A | NS | D | SD | Mean | SD |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|------|------|
| Elections must be seen to be free and fair for democracy to survival | 72 (12.0) | 62 (10.3) | 45 (7.5) | 192 (32.0) | 229 (38.2) | 3.74 | 1.37 |
| Election malpractices is normal in democracy | 120 (20.0) | 82 (13.7) | 48 (8.0) | 193 (32.2) | 157 (26.2) | 3.31 | 1.49 |
| Voting at election is a constitutional right in a democratic system | 53 (8.8) | 117 (19.5) | 69 (11.5) | 226 (37.7) | 135 (22.5) | 3.46 | 1.27 |
| Democracy can only be practice successfully in developed economy. | 53 (8.8) | 99 (16.5) | 81 (13.5) | 257 (42.8) | 110 (18.3) | 3.45 | 1.22 |
| Democracy give room for lot of illegal activities in government | 94 (15.7) | 103 (17.2) | 88 (14.7) | 172 (28.7) | 143 (23.8) | 3.28 | 1.40 |
| Democracy is a dirty game | 133 (22.2) | 139 (23.2) | 62 (10.3) | 155 (25.8) | 111 (18.5) | 2.95 | 1.46 |
| Democracy provides citizens with opportunity to have influence over government. | 46 (7.7) | 96 (16.0) | 119 (19.8) | 222 (37.0) | 117 (19.5) | 3.45 | 1.19 |
| Democracy government in guarantees individual rights. | 61 (10.2) | 36 (6.0) | 72 (12.0) | 251 (41.8) | 180 (30.0) | 3.76 | 1.23 |
| Democracy is game for the rich citizens. | 88 (14.7) | 105 (17.5) | 48 (8.0) | 162 (27.0) | 197 (32.8) | 3.46 | 1.46 |
| Democracy cannot grow where people rig to win election. | 77 (12.8) | 66 (11.0) | 87 (14.5) | 181 (30.2) | 189 (31.5) | 3.57 | 1.37 |
| Democracies are not good at maintaining order | 71 (11.8) | 60 (10.0) | 75 (12.5) | 189 (31.5) | 205 (34.2) | 3.66 | 1.35 |
| Democracy may have problems but it's better than any other form of government | 46 (7.7) | 28 (4.7) | 70 (11.7) | 243 (40.50) | 213 (35.5) | 3.92 | 1.16 |
| Total | | | | | | 3.50 | 1.22 |

*Percentages (%) in parentheses

Table 2 presents the frequency, percentage and mean attitudes held by the participants.

The analysis of the survey items found that the overall mean score for all items was 3.50 indicating positive attitudes of teachers towards democratic governance. Of all items, eleven exhibited high mean values above 3.00 indicating high favourable attitudes towards the item content; only one item exhibited moderate mean value of 2.95.

Table 3: Perceptions of Democratic Governance

| | SA | A | NS | D | SD | Mean | SD |
|--|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|------|------|
| There is respect for rule of law. | 64 (10.7) | 55 (9.2) | 64 (10.7) | 266 (44.3) | 151 (25.2) | 3.64 | 1.25 |
| The government is responsive to the yearning of the people. | 63 (10.5) | 51 (8.5) | 59 (9.8) | 266 (44.3) | 161 (26.8) | 3.69 | 1.25 |
| There are opportunities for all men and women to improve or maintain their well-being | 61 (10.2) | 82 (13.7) | 96 (16.0) | 252 (42.0) | 109 (18.2) | 3.44 | 1.22 |
| Decision makers in government are accountable | 125 20.8 | 126 21.0 | 105 17.5 | 169 28.2 | 75 12.5 | 2.91 | 1.35 |
| I'm satisfied with current government programme. | 98 16.3 | 132 22.0 | 69 11.5 | 210 35.0 | 91 15.2 | 3.11 | 1.35 |
| Every citizen have a voice in decision making | 86 14.3 | 158 26.3 | 80 13.3 | 196 32.7 | 80 13.3 | 3.04 | 1.30 |
| I think there is no democracy in Nigeria | 84 14.0 | 155 25.8 | 81 13.5 | 180 30.0 | 100 16.7 | 3.10 | 1.33 |
| Democracy can only be practice successfully in developed economy | 43 7.2 | 98 16.3 | 87 14.5 | 228 38.0 | 144 24.0 | 3.55 | 1.22 |
| Democracy give room for lot of illegal activities in government | 85 14.2 | 135 22.5 | 63 10.5 | 201 33.5 | 116 19.3 | 3.21 | 1.36 |
| Democracy provide opportunity for people more say in government decisions | 64 10.7 | 114 19.0 | 97 16.2 | 226 37.7 | 99 16.5 | 3.30 | 1.25 |
| Democracy in Nigeria provide citizens with opportunity to have influence over government | 46 7.7 | 104 17.3 | 103 17.2 | 248 41.3 | 99 16.5 | 3.42 | 1.18 |
| People should not have to vote if they don't want to | 126 21.0 | 155 25.8 | 70 11.7 | 160 26.7 | 89 14.8 | 2.89 | 1.40 |
| There are unfulfilled promises regarding social benefits once they are elected in Nigeria. | 44 7.3 | 138 23.0 | 106 17.7 | 196 32.7 | 116 19.3 | 3.34 | 1.23 |
| Democratic government is not good at maintaining law/order in Nigeria | 61 10.2 | 59 9.8 | 89 14.8 | 196 32.7 | 195 32.5 | 3.68 | 1.30 |
| Nigeria democratic government may have problems in its practice but it is better than other form of government | 243 (40.5) | 257 (42.8) | 42 (7.0) | 19 (3.2) | 39 (6.5) | 4.08 | 1.09 |
| Total | | | | | | 3.36 | 1.26 |

*Percentages (%) in parentheses

As shown in Table 3, in all 15 items with exception of one have mean value above 3.00. The mean value ranges between 3.04 and 4.08. The analysis of the perception section of the survey found that the overall mean score for all items was 3.36, indicating positive perception of democratic governance in Nigeria. The analysis of each item provides more insight about their perceptions. The respondents' responses on the first item indicate that they have strong perception with a mean value of 3.64.

Research Question 2: Is there any significant difference between demographic variables and political participation, attitudes and perception of Nigerians towards democracy and democratic governance?

Table 4: T-test of male and female teachers' participation, attitudes and perception of democratic government

| | | N | Mean | Std. D | T | Sig |
|---------------|--------|----------|-------------|---------------|----------|------------|
| Participation | Male | 349 | 21.24 | 4.24 | 3.913 | .000 |
| | Female | 251 | 19.94 | 3.68 | | |
| Attitudes | Male | 349 | 42.18 | 6.76 | .853 | .392 |
| | Female | 251 | 41.72 | 6.18 | | |
| Perception | Male | 349 | 51.40 | 9.06 | 3.430 | .001 |
| | Female | 251 | 48.97 | 7.79 | | |

*significant at 0.05

Table 4 depicts that independent sample t-test was applied to compare male and female teachers' participation, attitudes and perceptions of democratic government.

There was significant differences between male and female teachers' participation, and perception of democratic governance. The mean score of male teachers were significantly higher than their female counterparts. This suggests that male teachers participate more in politics and possess positive attitudes and perception towards democratic governance than their female counterparts. Thus confirming the assertion that politics in Nigeria is male dominated.

Table 5: One-way ANOVA of participation, attitudes and perception towards democratic government

| | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------|-------------|
| Religion | | | | | | |
| Participation | Between Groups | 309.352 | 2 | 154.676 | 9.656 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 9562.648 | 597 | 16.018 | | |
| | Total | 9872.000 | 599 | | | |
| Attitudes | Between Groups | 7.615 | 2 | 3.808 | .089 | .915 |
| | Within Groups | 25486.325 | 597 | 42.691 | | |
| | Total | 25493.940 | 599 | | | |
| Perception | Between Groups | 811.575 | 2 | 405.788 | 5.533 | .004 |
| | Within Groups | 43781.785 | 597 | 73.336 | | |
| | Total | 44593.360 | 599 | | | |
| Age | | | | | | |
| Participation | Between Groups | 498.691 | 2 | 249.346 | 15.881 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 9373.309 | 597 | 15.701 | | |
| | Total | 9872.000 | 599 | | | |
| Attitudes | Between Groups | 472.996 | 2 | 236.498 | 5.643 | .004 |
| | Within Groups | 25020.944 | 597 | 41.911 | | |
| | Total | 25493.940 | 599 | | | |
| Perception | Between Groups | 405.295 | 2 | 202.648 | 2.738 | .066 |
| | Within Groups | 44188.065 | 597 | 74.017 | | |
| | Total | 44593.360 | 599 | | | |
| Education Qualification | | | | | | |
| Participation | Between Groups | 304.287 | 3 | 101.429 | 6.318 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 9567.713 | 596 | 16.053 | | |
| | Total | 9872.000 | 599 | | | |
| Attitudes | Between Groups | 640.484 | 3 | 213.495 | 5.120 | .002 |
| | Within Groups | 24853.456 | 596 | 41.700 | | |
| | Total | 25493.940 | 599 | | | |
| Perception | Between Groups | 2402.278 | 3 | 800.759 | 11.312 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 42191.082 | 596 | 70.790 | | |
| | Total | 44593.360 | 599 | | | |

*significant at 0.05 Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

Results of the one-way ANOVAs to compare teachers' participation, attitudes and perception towards democratic government based on age, religion, and education qualification are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5 indicated that significant differences exist in religion and participation $F(2, 599) = 9.656, p < .000$; perception $F(2, 599) = 5.533, p < .004$. Statistically significant difference were found by age in all the three dependent variables - participation $F(2, 599) = 15.885, p < .000$; attitudes $F(2, 599) = 5.643, p < .004$, and perception $F(2, 599) = 2.738, p < .066$. Furthermore, statistically significant differences were found with respect to educational background in participation $F(3, 599) = 6.318, p < .000$, attitudes $F(3, 599) = 3.120, p < .002$ and in perception $F(3, 599) = 11.312, p < .001$.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between teachers' socio-demographic characteristic and their political participation, attitudes and perception of democracy and democratic governance in Nigeria?

Table 6, shows the correlation between socio-demographic characteristics and participation, attitudes and perception of democratic governance.

Table 6: Correlation between socio-demographic characteristics and participation, attitudes and perception

| | Sex | Religion | Age | Educ. qualification | Participation | Attitude | Perception |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|
| Sex | 1 | | | | | | |
| Religion | .317** | 1 | | | | | |
| Age | -.008 | .172** | 1 | | | | |
| Education qualification | .034 | .152** | .329** | 1 | | | |
| Participation | -.158** | -.070 | -.026 | -.116** | 1 | | |
| Attitudes | -.035 | .017 | -.095* | -.155** | .126** | 1 | |
| Perception | -.139** | -.134** | -.087* | -.178** | .307** | .521** | 1 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As Table 6 indicates, attitude toward democratic is clearly related to perception of democratic governance ($r = .521, p < 0.01$). Political participation also shows significant correlation with attitudes ($r = .126, p < 0.01$) and perception ($r = .307, p < 0.01$) both positive and weak. The correlation between respondents' socio-demographic variables and all four dependent variables of participation, attitudes and perception of democratic governance were negative. This lends support to the idea that attitudes and behaviour are related.

Discussions

The research focuses on investigating Nigerian teachers' participation, attitudes and perception of democratic government. The results were discussed with prior research. This research shows that teachers are apolitical and less-involved in political activities. However, they have positive attitude and favourable perception. This is in agreement with Sarwar, Yousuf and Hussain (2010), who reported that teachers in Pakistan possessed negative attitude towards democracy.

The result also showed significant difference between male and female teachers' participation and perception of democratic governance. Findings of present research is similar with the findings of (Murtaza, & Akbar, 2019) which reported that male teachers were practicing more democratic practices as compared to female teachers. However, the present finding contradict Ayse (2018) result that found no significant difference democratic attitude of prospective teachers based on gender. Furthermore, there were significant difference in teachers' participation, attitudes and perception of democratic government across age, religion and educational qualification. This is in consonant with Khan and Khan (2020) study on the attitude of Pakistanis' towards democracy which were found to differ on the basis of gender, age, education and income.

Teachers' educational backgrounds was found to be related to participation, attitude towards democracy and perception of democratic governance. Similar findings were found in the studies

of (Yigit, & Çolak, 2011; Abonu, *et al*, 2013) that there reported relationship between educational level and attitude and perception of democratic. It was found that there is a significant positive correlation between teachers' participation, attitude and perception toward democratic governance.

Conclusions

This research finding has yielded some conclusion about secondary school teachers' participation, attitudes and perception of democratic and democratic governance in Nigeria. First, teachers' level of participation in democratic processes is low. The lack of good governance has led to most of the teachers developing of political apathy. Strikingly, however, is that the teachers possessed positive attitudes towards democracy and democratic governance.

Second, Nigerian teachers differ in their participation, and perception of democratic governance. Men participated in democratic process than their female counterparts. This suggests that male respondents participate more in politics and possess positive attitudes and perception towards democratic governance than their female counterparts. It also indicated that politics in Nigeria is still men dominated. Third, political participation, attitude toward democracy and perception of democratic governance. Socio-demographic variables were related to political participation, attitudes and perception of democratic governance. This lends support to the idea that attitudes and behaviour are related.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations were put forward: i) due to the important role of the teachers as agent of change and socialization in the process of getting students to internalize democracy, they should be encourage to participate and internalize democracy thus act as a model. ii) Effort should be made to encourage more women participation in democratic processes and promote equal opportunities in power distribution and power relations between the male and female gender.

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