
Assessment of the Political Representation of Elderly Persons in the Governance of Ondo State of Nigeria between 2003 and 2018

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Abstract: *The aim of this research study assessed the elderly people's political representation in the governance of Ondo State between 2003 and 2018. Available and existing literature noted that the elderly people represent huge percentage of the Nigeria's population as equally obtainable as in Ondo State where the focus of the research work lies. The study therefore investigated the inversely connection of elderly people's population compared to elective and appointive positions occupied in Ondo State specifically the Executive and legislative levels of governance in the periods under study. The study adopts theories of ageing, activity and political behaviour as its theoretical frameworks to guide the work. The methodology used consists of both primary and secondary data which derived from the use of interview and survey research with attention to the administration and analysis of well-structured questionnaire and the use of Focus Group Discussion. Also, Secondary data sourced through textbooks, journals, Internet Materials and Government Official bulletin on the subject matter, while statistical means such as percentage (count) representation, frequency table and pictorial representation were engaged to analysis the findings of the study. The research examined the impacts of senility, health, malnutrition, lack of shelter, fear of depression, isolation and financial incapacity as constraints to political participation and representation in the governance of Ondo State and Nigeria in general. The outcome of the research study provided essential tools and revelations for scholars, researchers, governments, electoral bodies and public policy analysts in Ondo State and Nigeria in the search for elderly people's participation in elective and appointive government positions as the outcome enhanced future research study.*

Keywords: *Ageing, Elderly People, Political Behaviour, Representation, Transitional.*

1. INTRODUCTION

This study is to assess the relationship between elderly Persons' active involvement in Political activities and hedonic wellbeing as it is a key concept in the active ageing policy framework and necessity for further development and sustainability of democracy (Serrat, Villar, Guillian & Zacaes, 2016:132). The fast growing number of elderly people during the last few decades has impacted significantly on the political, economic and social functions of societies in both industrialized and developing regions. Political participation and representation of elderly persons in Western democracies have been welcome with an increasing attention during the last decades as a result/consequences of demographic transformations and a growing older electorates and decision makers. However, studies have shown how age influences political behaviour or how older people differ from younger ones, while political and representation of elderly persons can be viewed as a function of mobilizing factors like high education or extensive social status, overall wellbeing, play a role for their inclusion and inclination to participate and be represented in civic activities (Nygard & Jakobsson, 2013:66). In America, contemporary Politicians and their advisors focus on elderly voters as a pivotal segment of the American electorates as one reason for such is that elderly voters constitute a substantial proportion of voters today, largely because of age-group differences in voting turn out rates, and they have a considerable large proportion in prosperous group of people supporting the same way (Binstock, 2000:19).

Furthermore, policy framework such as: African Union Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing (2003), National policy on care and wellbeing of the Elderly (Draft 2003), National policy on Ageing (Draft 2006), United Nations Economic Committee for Africa: The State of older people in Africa (Draft 2007), Senior Citizens Care Foundation (SCCF) National Policy for Senior Citizens in Nigeria are all existing legislations. (Araromi, 2015:132). Essentially, electoral politics has been determined by people aged 50 and older who have been in the voting majority due to sheer number and their high voting propensity. In democratic system that are based on majority decisions, this group of elderly voters has influence on policy outputs (Goerres, 2009:4).

Problem Statement and Justification of Study

In Nigeria, the elderly constitutes a segment of the population that is not only productive, but very influential to the nation's development as it is seen in the cultural, socio-economic and political aspects of society, as they are well integrated into the nation's plans and policies. The priorities and plans of the elderly may differ from those of younger or middle aged adults which will require creative use of the limited available resources. As such, there is the need to understand the aged in order to raise question like what is it like to grow old? Etc. it has been argued that there is an inverse relations between social development and the status of old person, a historical shift from veneration to degradation. Recognition for elderly has decreased as a proportional number of them increased in the society. The elderly became viewed as burden to the society. So this changing race of the elderly has also necessitated the need for their study especially in political participation and representation in appointive and elective positions (Dorren, 2014:138; Abanyam, 2013:38).

Objectives of the Study

1. Accessed the level of the elderly people in political participation and representation of Ondo State governance;
2. Interrogated the efficiency of the elderly people in both legislative and executive arms of government towards participation and representation politically in the governance of Ondo State;
3. Determined the efforts to include the rights of elderly people in elective and appointive positions in Ondo State; and
4. Investigated and discuss the reasons (barriers) for the exclusion of elderly people in political participation and representation in Ondo State of Nigeria.

Literature Review

With the available avalanche of literatures on elderly people in political participation, representation in the governance and politics of Ondo State, the fundamental basis of literature review is to provide theoretical perspective for the research study as many research studies and publications in politics have to be postulated across the political spectrum. Many scholars have written articles on the concept which include: Thompson (2001) noted that political representation is a process in which one individual or group (the representative) acts on behalf of other individuals or groups (the represented) in making or influencing authoritative decisions, politics or laws for a political system (Thompson, 2001:38). To Aroogh & Shahboulaghi (2020) that civil participation provides important opportunities for a growing proportion of elderly people to remain healthy, active and involved in political participation and representation. It enables elderly people to be more involved in the democratic process and to have their voices heard as understanding older people's political participation is the key to foster their inclusion in policy making process particularly in the context of ageing population (Serrat, 2018:67; Aroogh & Shahboulaghi, 2020:67; Applewhite, 2000:4).

The politics of elderly people explores the relationship between ageing politics and representatives as reveals the complexity of elderly people's representation and how the power of the organisation exercise their legitimacy and existence remain highly contingent on government policy design, political opportunity, structures and the prevailing cultural and socio-economic milieu will dictate the terrain. As such, an important aspect is the manner in which elderly people and their representative groups are given the opportunity to articulate their interests in the policy making process (Doyle, 2014:8) Animasahun & Chapman (2017) observed that UN's definition of older people as those persons over age 60 years as estimated that older people have increased from 11% in 2000 to 22% in 2005 which has clearly transformed all aspects of society ranging from changes in economic, security, employment opportunities and family structures (Animasahun & Chapman 2017:580), while Bukov, Maas & Lampert (2002) defined political participation as acts which involves decision making about social groups and the allocation of resources. These decisions are services that are rendered by certain groups or by single persons in a collective context (Bukov, Maas & Lambert, and 2002: 513). Also, Serrat, Scharf, Villar & Gomez (2020) noted that political parties and organizations, signing petitions, boycotting and attending political rallies, running

for of holding public office and other collective political manifestations (Serrat, Scharf, Vilar & Gomez, 2020:42; Carey, 2019:1698).

Kelly (2009) noted that the active participation of older persons in society and development is based on providing older persons with the opportunity to continue contributing to the society. The contributions of older persons reach beyond their economic activities and extend into their roles in families and in the community as they are equally and actively engaged in the development process where their skills, experiences, wisdom and knowledge are beneficial for all (Kelly, 2009:5)

2. RELATED WORK

Tambe and Kopacheva (2023) noted that age and participation have deep relationship where life-cycle development with different period determine voting behavior and pattern as well as older age(s) have more passion in participating in government programmes. Atumah & Ekele (2019) related that elderly persons are sometimes excluded not only from political participation but in family and community, abuse and neglect information and education and exclusion from excess to quality and affordable health care facilities. Furthermore, Stockemer and Sandstorm (2023) noted that where people in the legislature and executive have stayed longer in such offices, they tend to favour elderly persons in their policies than the youths towards the interests of older colleagues. Also, Ani (nd) observed that the participation and activism of elderly persons have declined due to health challenges and uncontrollable threats, lack of memory and children desires not to allow their parents to undertake out-door tasks while Odude, (2023) noted that elderly persons have suffered public neglect in terms of getting social security fund which make them vulnerable to exclusion even in exercising their political right of participation and representation in the public sector. Mike (nd) observed that elderly persons should be engaged and remained integrated into the society activities like politics, social and economic endeavors. Nygard & Jakobson (2011) observed that elderly persons voted while participating in politics in both formal and non-institutionalized forms of participation. According to Goerres (2009) that “Politicians and public Commentators expect growing Political pressures from a group of older people who will dominate all political processes and influence outcome in their favour. According to this view, electoral policies in particular will be determined by people aged and older who will soon be In the voting majority due to sheer numbers and their high voting propensity” (Goerres, 2009: 21)

In addition, Solevid and Gyllenspetz (2022) observed that there is strong correlation between the political participation and ageing because participation declines with older age as the oldest persons still in the group that Involves least. While, Sidorenko (2012) drew up the format of elderly persons as: political influence of elderly persons (non- institutionalized participation includes: voting protesting and participation as well as in the participation decision making involve coordinating bodies consultative bodies and Ad – hoc consultative in public life.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework x-rayed the theory of activity amongst many other theories like ageing, social disengagement, continuity and political theories. The activity theory emerged from the positive relationship between greater levels of social involvement and satisfaction with life among the elderly. According to the theory, a person is most likely to succeed in old age if they continue to be active and take on productive roles in society replacing those that have been lost. It brings together an extensive amount of empirical data that corroborate practical application such that it encourages physical activities, voluntary work and social and political activities as much as they can undertake them despite their ages (Pinto & Neri, 2017:260). Theory of activity claims that a successful old age can be achieved by maintaining roles and relationships, it predates disengagement theory as ageing can be both a living and creative experience within elderly age, if replaced by new roles or activities to ensure happiness, values-consensus and well-being. For activity theorists, disengagement is not a natural process as advocated by ageist and does not promote in any shape a form of positive ageing. As such, elderly people constitute a significant part of society's structure which has a great role to play and has many demands that must be met (Adeleke, 2014:248), as well as for the elderly, maintaining social contacts and engaging in activities throughout the ageing process (Winstead, Yost, Cotten, Berkowsky, Anderson, 2014:892)

3. METHODOLOGY

The study was situated in Ondo State of Nigeria. The State was created from the defunct Western region of Nigeria on February, 1976 with a new capital in Akure. The State can be found in Western part of present Nigeria and it shares boundaries with states like Ogun, Osun, Ekiti, Edo, Kogi and by extension Atlantic Ocean to the South. It has 18 local Government Areas with a population of 3,460,877 of mainly Yoruba speaking people as majority with smaller tribes. It has enormous natural and mineral resources in her lands with adequate manpower and has primary, secondary and higher institutions of learning in addition to her inhabitants of men, women, adult and young people

Study Area

The study conducted randomly selected urban, rural towns and communities in Ondo State of nine (9) local governments out of eighteen (18) local government areas. This was done to ensure that the locations cut across the three senatorial districts of the State (Central, South and North)

Table 1: Design outlay for selecting study area location

Senatorial District	Local Govt to be selected	Numbers of commodities to be selected	Total number to be selected	Total aggregate
Ondo Central	Ondo East	Laje	5	15
	Akure North	Oba-Ile	5	
	Idanre	Alade	5	

Ondo South	Okitipupa	Okitipupa	5	15
	Odigbo	Ore	5	
	Ilaje	Igbekogbo	5	
Ondo North	Ose	Ifon, Imoru, Ute, Idoani, Idogun	5	15
	Akoko South-East	Akunnu, Isua, Ise, Epinmi Ipe	5	
	Akoko North-West	Ikare, Arigidi	5	
	9	45	45	45

Reasons for the Study Area Location

A total of Nine (9) local governments out of eighteen (18) local government were selected for the study. This ensured that the state was adequately represented. The nine local govt and forty-five communities selected were relatively appropriate for this chosen study.

Sample Frame/ Participants

The participation for this study were members of the communities which include older people, youths, students, leaders of communities, academics and professionals.

Interview

In the investigation of the study, execution and realization of the aims and objectives; both primary and secondary methods were used for data collection. The technique of data from primary sources include questionnaire, oral interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD), while the secondary data were sourced from relevant textbooks, Journal, Internet means and Government official publications. Analysis of data will be through frequency counts, percentage and descriptive analysis.

Method of Data Collection

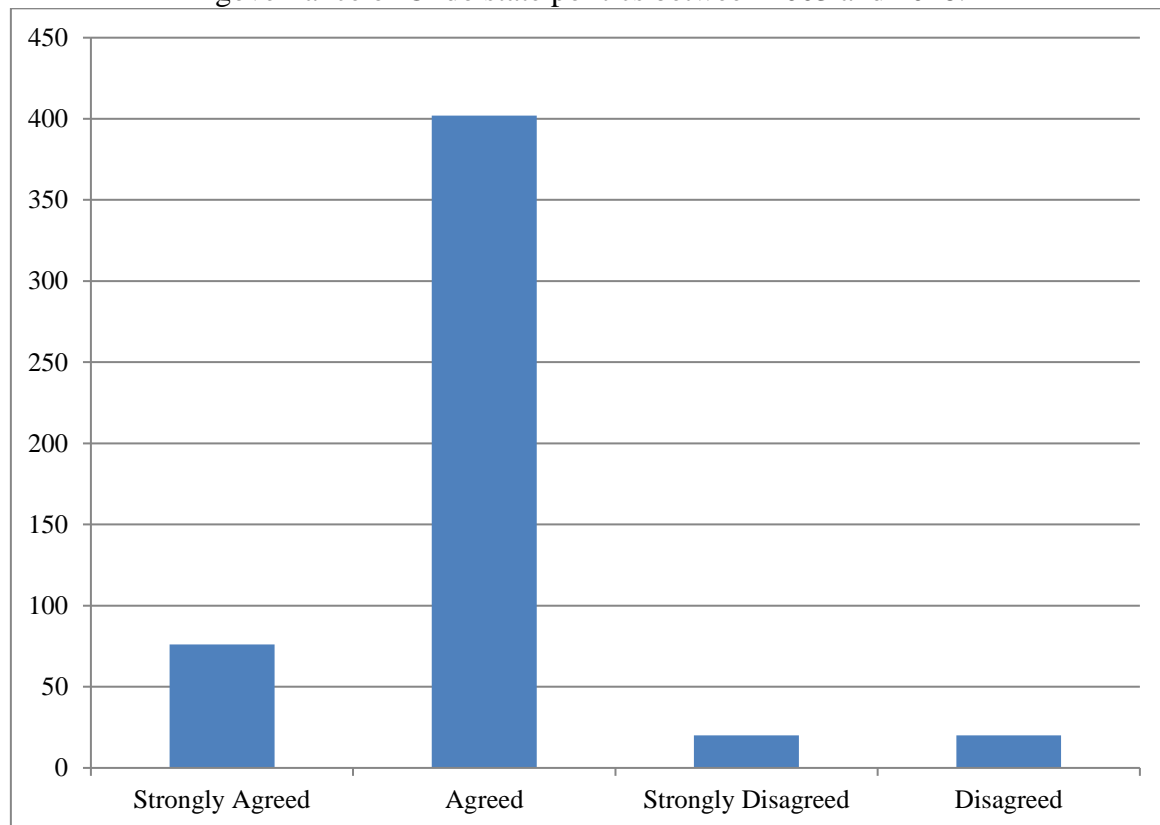
600 structured questionnaire were purchased and 20 personal interviews were conducted to gather information from respondent and focus group discussion gather information from respondent, while secondary data were collected from textbooks, journals and internet materials on the chosen topic.

Table 2: The elderly persons' participation and representation have been improved in the governance of Ondo state politics between 2003 and 2018.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agreed	76	14.7
Agreed	402	77.6
Disagreed	20	3.9
Strongly Disagreed	20	3.9

SOURCE: Field survey 2024

Fig. 1: The elderly persons' participation and representation have been improved in the governance of Ondo state politics between 2003 and 2018.



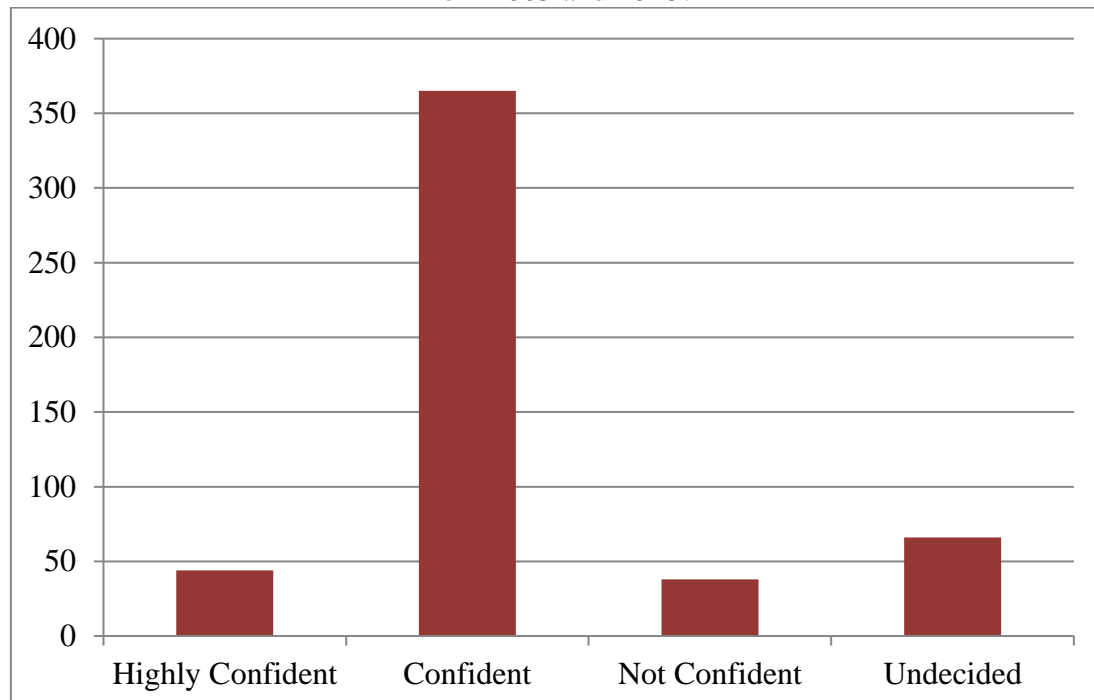
The result from table 2 and figure 1 indicated that 402 (78%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 76 (15%) agreed, while 20 (4%) of the respondent strongly disagreed and 20 (4%) of the disagreed that the elderly persons participation and representation have been improved in the governance of Ondo state politics between 2003 and 2018. The above outcome showed that majority 78% of the respondents strongly agreed that the elderly persons' participation and representation have been improved in the politics from 2003 to 2018.

Table 3: Are you confident that the elderly persons' economic, health and financial status as factors in the participation and representation in the politics and governance of Ondo state from 2003 and 2018?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
Highly Confident	44	8.8
Confident	365	71.2
Not Confident	38	7.4
Undecided	66	12.9

SOURCE: field survey 2024

Fig. 2 Are you confident that the elderly persons economic, health and financial status as factors in the participation and representation in the politics and governance of Ondo state from 2003 and 2018?



The outcome from table 3 and figure 2 are revealed that 44 (9%) of the respondents highly agreed and 365 (71.2%) confident while 38 (7.4%) of the respondents not confident and 66 (13%) undecided amongst respondents that the elderly persons' economic, health and financial status as factors in the participation and representation in the politics and governance of Ondo state from 2003 and 2018. The above result therefore indicated that 365 (71.2%) of the respondents confidently in the favour of the elderly persons' economic, health and financial status as factors in the participation and representation in the politics and governance of Ondo state from 2003 to 2018.

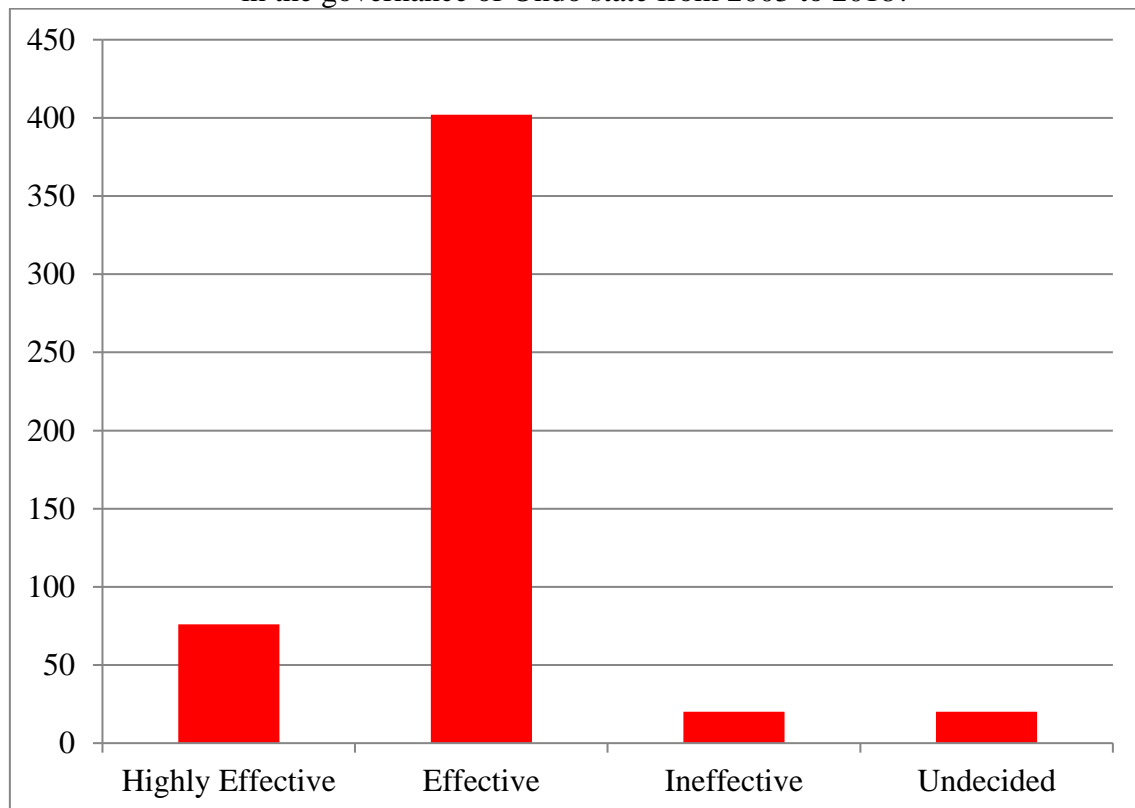
Table 4: How Have The Elderly Persons Been Effective And Efficient In Both Legislature And Executive Arms Of Ondo State Government Towards Participation And Representation Politically In The Governance Of Ondo State From 2003 To 2018?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
Highly Effective	76	14.7
Effective	402	77.6
Ineffective	20	3.9

Undecided	20	3.9
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SOURCE: Field work, 2024

Fig 3: How have the elderly persons become effective and efficient in both legislature and executive arms of Ondo state government towards participation and representation politically in the governance of Ondo state from 2003 to 2018?



The result revealed that 76(15%) of the respondents noted for highly effective and 402 (78%) for effective, while 20 (4%) from the respondents noted for ineffective and 20 (4%) from the respondents were undecided. As such, 402 (78%) of the respondents which formed the majority noted for effectiveness of the elderly persons efficient in both legislature and executive arms of Ondo state government towards the participation and representation politically in the governance of Ondo state from 2003 to 2018.

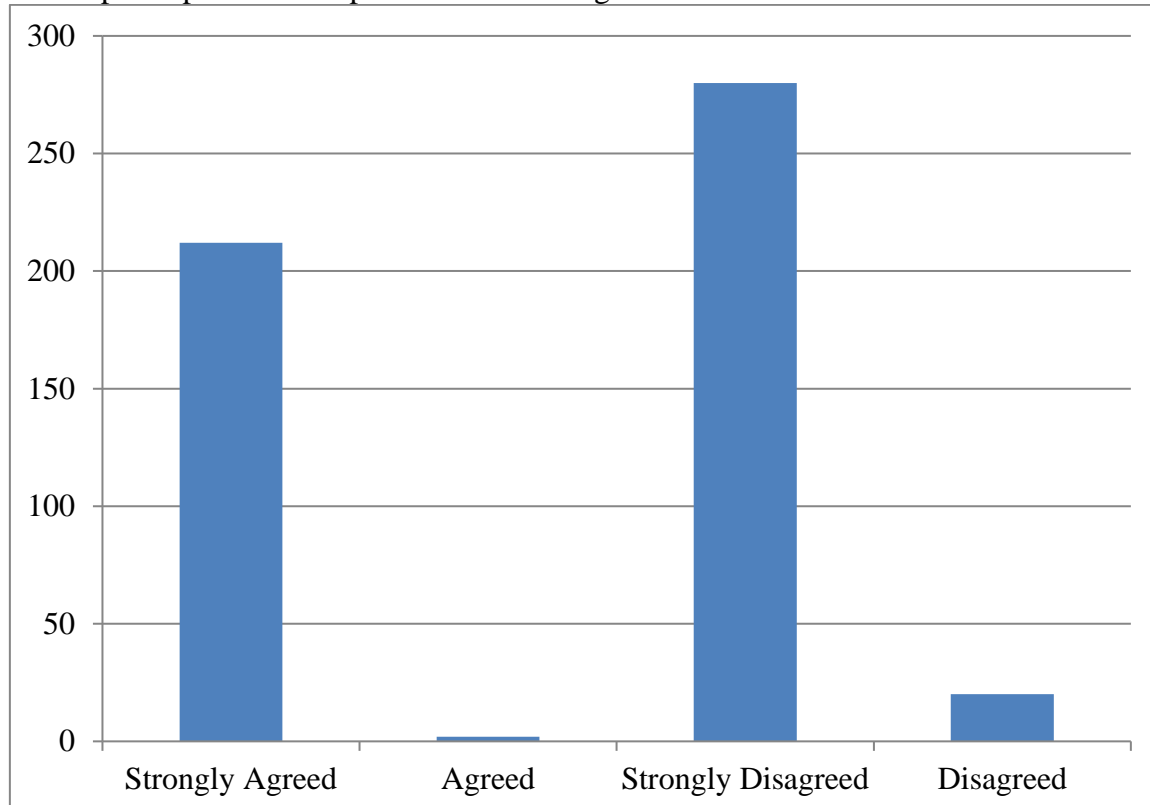
Table 5: Do you agree that barrier or exclusion continue to be impediment to elderly persons' political participation and representation in the governance of Ondo state from 2003 to 2018?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agreed	212	41.2
Agreed	02	0.4
Disagreed	280	54.5

Strongly Disagreed	20	3.9
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SOURCE: Field work 2024.

Fig 4: Do you agree that barrier or exclusion continue to be impediment to elderly persons' political participation and representation in the governance of Ondo state from 2003 to 2018?



The outcome from table 5 figure 4 revealed that 2 (0.4%) agreed by the respondents and 212 (41.2%) strongly agreed while 280 (55%) from the respondents disagreed and 20 (4%) from the respondents strongly disagreed. The result indicated that 280 (55%) of the respondents disagreed that barrier or exclusion continue to be impediment to the elderly persons political participation and representation to the politics of Ondo state governance from 2003 to 2018.

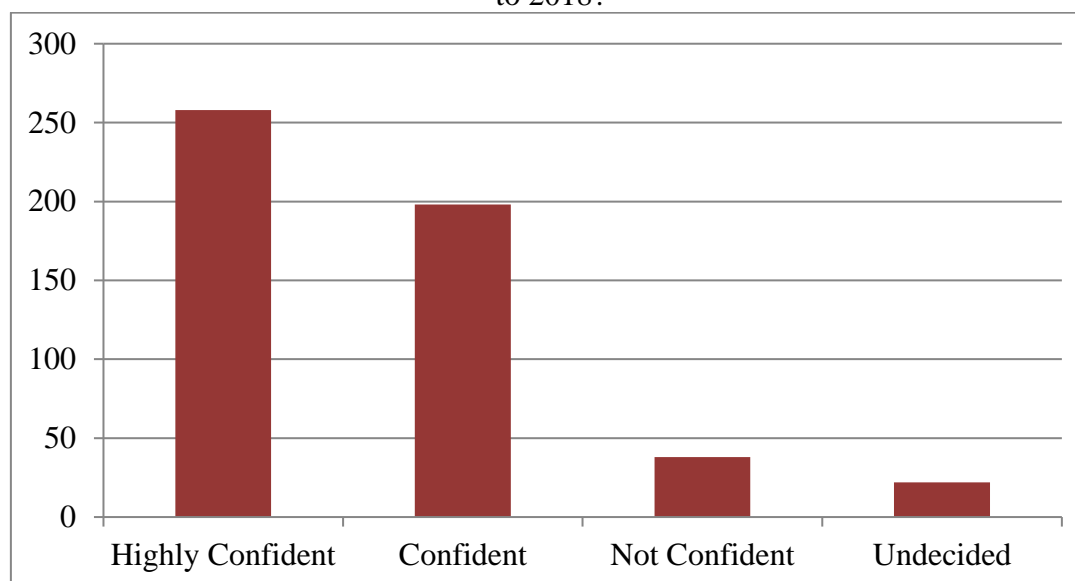
Table 6: Are you confident that the electoral law of Nigeria is fair enough to the elderly persons' political participation and representation in the governance of Ondo state from 2003 to 2018?

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
Highly Confident	258	50.0
Confident	198	38.4
Not Confident	38	7.4

Undecided	22	4.3
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SOURCE: field work 2024.

Fig. 5: Are you confident that the electoral law of Nigeria is fair enough to the elderly persons' political participation and representation in the governance of Ondo state from 2003 to 2018?



The outcome result have shown that 198 (38.4%) of the respondents were confident and 258 (50.0%) highly confident amongst the respondents, while 38 (7.4%) from the respondents not confident and 22 (4.3%) of the respondents were undecided. The above result revealed that the majority of the respondents, 258 (50.0%) are highly confident that the electoral law of Nigeria is fair enough for the elderly persons political participation and representation in the governance of Ondo state from 2003 and 2018?

Data Analysis or Technique

Simple percentage and frequency count and focus group discussion were used to interrogate the data gathered from the field work.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Kindly find there in the analysis of the table from table 6 to 10 below: The table 2: analysis the variables under investigation with results of the respondents where elderly persons' participation and representation in the policies of Ondo state have improved. The result showed majority 402(78%) agreed on that assertion, which signified a positive step.

Table 3: was analyzed on the variable that elderly persons' economic, health and financial status were factors in their participation and representation level, the result showed 365(71.2%) confident that such factors are real and factual to their involvement in the politics of Ondo state, 2003 to 2018

Table 4: revealed that the analysis on the variables used noted an effective frequency on how the elderly persons` have been performing under the legislature and executive arms of government of Ondo state between 2003 and 2018. The effective rate of 402(78%) was observed that show the majorly favoured that investigation.

Table 5: equally analyzed the result of the investigation and noted that from the variables of exclusion or barriers to elderly persons` participation and representation, the majority of respondent disagreed 280(55%) on that assertion, if they can be excluded. This revealed that they cannot be excluded on the account of such variables.

Table 6: The result revealed for the analysis that the electoral law of Nigeria is fair enough to the elderly persons` participation and representation in the politics of Ondo state, 2003 to 2018, while majority of the respondents 258(50%) highly confident that the electoral law has been on the side of elderly persons in the political participation and representation of the politics of Ondo state, 2003 to 2018

Summary of Findings

The research revealed out the following:

1. Contributed to knowledge on elderly persons` political participation and representation in the governance of Ondo state from 2003 to 2018.
2. Ascertained the level of degree of elderly persons involvement in the political governance of Ondo state
3. Identified the reason that aided there their performance and factors that could exclude them from the political participation and representation
4. Identified the legal or constitutional rights to governance via participation and representation politically.
5. It noted the change in the narrative of elderly persons can be efficient and effective in the discharge of their duties while maintaining high age(s).

Expected Contributions

The study factored more enlightenment about the elderly persons playing active support role in the political participation and representation in the governance of Ondo state noting that they constitute significant percentage within the Nigeria population demographically. Their stake in governance and politics are very formidable and sustainable to the state.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It is noted from the empirical research study that the elderly persons have been under represented, excluded and marginalized from the decision making apparatus especially in the politics of Ondo state from 2003 to 2018, as there were no significance numbers of the elderly persons in the governance of Ondo state. It is therefore, as stated by the study to recommend that political parties should endeavor to accommodate the elderly persons in the corridor of power, to engage them in act of governance and in the political process. The enabling environment through the electoral law, the constitution and political space is made available and conducive. They should be engaged in inclusive governance, fatherly roles, constructed engagement because of their non- violence altitude to political, social, economic

and cultural policies in the society. The comparative studies and analysis revealed that as obtainable on the wider world, elderly persons are again making impressive in roads more into statecraft and governance not only in Ondo state, Nigeria but in all democratic countries in Africa, Europe, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East.

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