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Article

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EFFECTS OF FINANCIAL DISPARITIES BETWEEN THE APC AND PDP ON THE ELECTORAL PERFORMANCE OF THE TWO PARTIES IN MALUMFASHI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examined the effects of financial disparities between the APC and PDP on the electoral performance of the two parties in Malumfashi local government area, Katsina state of Nigeria. The study employed a cross sectional descriptive survey research design to examine the effects of financial disparities between the APC and PDP on the electoral performance of the two parties. The targeted population was 351 APC officials and 222 PDP officials. Disproportionate stratified random sampling was used to select 39 party officials, ensuring representation across both parties. Data were gathered through a validated closed-ended questionnaire. Quantitative data were analysed through simple frequency tables and percentages, means and standard deviation, and SPSS version 23 was used in running the analysis. The findings of the study reveal that the APC's superior financial resources significantly influenced its electoral performance in Malumfashi during the 2023 general elections. This finding aligns with broader scholarly discussions on the role of money in politics. Financial disparities significantly shaped the electoral performance of APC and PDP in Malumfashi, with APC consistently rated higher in funding-related activities such as media outreach, mobilization, and campaign organization. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that there is need for Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to enhance oversight by implementing stricter limits on campaign spending and requiring full disclosure of political donations and expenditures. Regular audits and penalties for violations would discourage excessive or opaque funding practices, ensuring a more level playing field for all political parties.

Keywords: Effects, Financial Disparities, APC and PDP Parties, Electoral Performance.

Introduction

One of the key institutions underpinning liberal democracies globally is the political party. Political parties serve as essential intermediaries between the electorate and the government, helping to structure political choices, foster participation, and consolidate democratic governance. Their role is not merely confined to elections; they are central to organizing government functions, mobilizing public opinion, and aggregating societal interests. Without political parties, the modern democratic polity would struggle to function effectively, as they are foundational in promoting political pluralism and ensuring representation across diverse social groups (Etzioni, 2021). In Nigeria, political parties have historically functioned as the principal vehicles for contesting elections and shaping political outcomes. The All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP), as the two dominant parties, have significantly influenced national and local political dynamics. These parties are not only instrumental in nominating candidates and forming governments but also in mobilizing resources for electoral campaigns. According to Gallego and Wantchekon (2017), political party finance defined as the use of funds for electioneering, campaigns, membership drives, and secretariat maintenance is a critical determinant of a party's electoral capacity and internal democratic structure.

However, a major challenge within Nigeria's democratic landscape is the growing financial inequality between political parties, which has implications for electoral integrity and democratic fairness. Wealthier parties like the APC and PDP often benefit from more substantial funding sources, including party member contributions, elite donations, and sometimes questionable sources of income. Helmky and Levitsky (2021) note that such disparities not only skew electoral competition but also enhance the potential for vote buying, voter manipulation, and other undemocratic practices. These practices are more pronounced during elections, where financial inducements are used to sway voter decisions, especially in economically marginalized communities. Vote buying in particular, has emerged as a significant issue in Nigerian elections. As Mendilow (2018) observes, financial abuse in politics undermines democratic principles by prioritizing wealth over public service and civic merit. Electoral frameworks in many democracies, including Nigeria, have attempted to regulate political party finance to prevent the misuse of funds and protect the sovereignty of the electorate. Nevertheless, enforcement remains weak, and the persistent financial dominance of certain political parties continues to erode public trust in the democratic process (Donovan & Karp, 2017). This leads to a scenario where financial capability, rather than policy or performance, becomes the major determinant of electoral success.

The situation is particularly concerning in local contexts such as Malumfashi Local Government Area in Katsina State, where economic vulnerability makes voters more susceptible to financial inducements. The disparity in campaign spending between the APC and PDP in such areas can significantly influence electoral performance, defined here as the ability of a political party to mobilize votes, secure election victories, and maintain political relevance. The more financially endowed a party is, the greater its ability to dominate campaign narratives, host larger rallies, and distribute financial or material incentives, thereby directly impacting voter choices and election results (Corduener, 2019). Given the implications of financial inequalities for electoral performance, internal democracy, and public trust, there is a strong justification for conducting research into how such disparities affect elections at the grassroots level. This study specifically focuses on Malumfashi Local Government Area to examine how differences in the financial strength of the APC and PDP influence their political fortunes. Understanding these dynamics will not only contribute to academic discourse but also inform policymakers and

electoral bodies about the need for effective regulation of political party financing to ensure fairer and more credible elections.

Statement of the Problem

Ensuring good governance across the world is closely linked to the credibility and integrity of a country's electoral system, particularly within democratic frameworks. A credible electoral process forms the backbone of democratization, promoting transparency, accountability, and political stability. However, in many democracies like Nigeria, this ideal is undermined when electoral performance is largely influenced by the financial strength of political parties rather than the popularity of their policies or the competence of their candidates. When campaign success becomes a function of financial power manifested through vote buying, extensive media control, and the mobilization of large-scale rallies it distorts the democratic process and weakens public confidence in electoral outcomes. Although multiple studies like (Mendilow, 2018; Helmky and Levitsky, 2021 and among others) have explored the general effects of financial inequality on elections in Nigeria, there remains a significant gap in localized assessments of this phenomenon. This study therefore seeks to examine how financial disparities between two major political parties the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) affect their electoral performance within Malumfashi Local Government Area of Katsina State.

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- i. To what extent did financial inequalities (disparities) between the APC and PDP influence their electoral performance in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections?
- ii. What role did political party financing play in the electoral performance of the APC and PDP in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections?

Literature Review

Political parties are a cornerstone of liberal democracies, playing a vital role in simplifying electoral choices, fostering political participation, and facilitating governance. Scholars such as Corduwener (2019), Aiyede (2022), and Mendilow (2018) emphasize that the effective functioning of political parties in modern democracies is heavily reliant on adequate finances. Political party finance referred to by Etzioni (2021) as "money for electioneering" encompasses not only campaign expenditures but also the costs of maintaining party offices, conducting research, raising political awareness, and other routine activities. Kevin Casas-Zamora (2008) and Mendilow (2018) expands this definition, noting that political finance covers both electoral and non-electoral spending by parties and candidates, distinguishing it from the narrower concept of campaign finance. In many parts of the world, including Western Europe, political finance leans more toward public funding of political parties rather than individual candidates (Gallego & Wantchekon, 2017). However, in both developed and developing democracies, adequate and transparent financing is essential for political parties to effectively participate in democratic processes. As Sulaiman (2017) pointed out, political party finance is increasingly viewed as a critical issue that must be handled with transparency to uphold the integrity and fairness of democratic processes.

In emerging and dysfunctional democracies like Nigeria, political party finance plays a central yet controversial role in shaping electoral performance and democratic governance. Traditionally, mass parties relied on widespread grassroots support and voluntary activism, but

declining membership has made political parties increasingly dependent on financial resources to run campaigns and maintain operations. In this context, the use and misuse of money has become a major influence on election outcomes. While political party financing is essential for political engagement, it frequently lacks transparency, especially in Nigeria where funds are often sourced through illicit means and used for vote buying, bribery, and coercion. Scholars like Sule and Kwarah (2018) argue that such financial practices distort democratic processes, entrench corruption, and erode public trust in elections. INEC's weak enforcement of political finance laws has allowed political actors to manipulate outcomes with impunity. The heavy influence of money in Nigerian politics, especially in the Fourth Republic, has led to systemic political corruption, poor representation, and weakened democratic institutions. As observed by Sule (2023) and Helmky and Levitsky (2021) this phenomenon not only undermines electoral credibility but also amplifies the development challenges by empowering "moneybags" and side-lining genuine democratic choice. Consequently, unregulated political party finance in Nigeria remains a major impediment to credible elections and sustainable democratic governance.

In Nigeria's Fourth Republic, electoral politics has become deeply entangled with political party finance, resulting in the dominance of money politics and the erosion of democratic ideals. Political parties and politicians often prioritize winning power at all costs, deploying vast financial resources, human capital, and political strategies, which has led to unprecedented spending during elections (Kura, 2014). Rather than promoting ideology or national development, parties are often controlled by wealthy individuals and godfathers who sponsor candidates for personal gain, turning political sponsorship into a business investment (Sule & Kwarah, 2018). This financial advantage enables elites to siphon public funds, manipulate electoral outcomes, and recycle power, regardless of their performance in office. The chronic poverty, illiteracy, and weak regulatory institutions further fuel this trend, making vote buying, bribery of electoral officials, and electoral violence common features of Nigeria's elections (Nkechi & Innocent, 2014; Omilusi, 2016). A 2023 post-election survey revealed that 85% of respondents identified political parties as the most corrupt institutions in Nigeria, citing excessive and illegal spending, vote buying, and collusion with security forces. Consequently, political party finance has become a tool for perpetuating elite control, shielding corrupt actors, and undermining free and fair elections, thus posing a serious threat to good governance and democratic consolidation in the country.

In Nigeria's Fourth Republic, the financial disparities between the two major political parties the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC) has played a decisive role in shaping their electoral performance and dominance. Historically, the PDP, which held power from 1999 to 2015, had significant access to state resources, allowing it to outspend other parties in campaigns and political mobilization (Kura, 2014). However, following the APC's emergence and electoral victory in 2015, the financial tide shifted. The APC, now controlling the federal government, gained similar advantages in terms of access to public funds and elite patronage, widening the financial gap with smaller parties and even outpacing the PDP in certain regions (Sule, 2023). This disparity is not just about campaign funding but also reflects deeper structural inequalities, including unequal access to media, logistical resources, and influence over public institutions. As observed by Sule, Azizuddin, Sani and Bakri (2017). both parties heavily rely on wealthy donors, political godfathers, and questionable funding sources, but the ruling party whether PDP in the past or APC presently tends to dominate the financial and political landscape, thereby undermining fair competition and reinforcing money-driven electoral outcomes.

Research Method and Design

This study employed a cross sectional descriptive survey research design to examine the effects of financial disparities between the APC and PDP on electoral performance in Malumfashi Local Government Area. The targeted population was 351 APC officials and 222 PDP officials. Disproportionate stratified random sampling was used to select 39 party officials, ensuring representation across both parties. Data were gathered through a validated closed-ended questionnaire, with the reliability of the questionnaire confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha (0.798). Quantitative data were analysed through simple frequency tables and percentages, means and standard deviation and SPSS version 23 was used in running the analysis.

Data Analysis

RQ1: To what extent did financial inequalities (disparity) between the APC and PDP affect their electoral performance in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections?

(Scale: SD=1, D=2, UD=3, A=4, SA=5)

Statement	SD	D	UD	A	SA	Mean	SD
APC raised and spent more money than PDP in buying media airtime	3 (3.8%)	13 (16.7%)	5 (6.4%)	30 (38.5%)	27 (34.6%)	3.90	1.15
APC performed better than PDP in electoral mobilization across 12 wards	1 (1.3%)	4 (5.1%)	3 (3.8%)	30 (38.5%)	40 (51.3%)	4.32	0.86
APC organized more campaign rallies than PDP	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	-	-
APC used resources to reach all Polling Units; PDP did not	3 (3.8%)	6 (7.7%)	5 (6.4%)	41 (52.6%)	23 (29.5%)	3.90	1.00
Party received grants from friends, supporters, and well-wishers	1 (1.3%)	7 (9.0%)	2 (2.6%)	33 (42.3%)	35 (44.9%)	4.14	0.94
Party received financial donations from supporters and well-wishers	0 (0%)	1 (1.3%)	0 (0%)	36 (46.2%)	41 (52.6%)	4.51	0.55
Party organized a well-planned fundraising campaign	1 (1.3%)	3 (3.8%)	1 (1.3%)	30 (38.5%)	43 (55.1%)	4.41	0.82
Party initiated a well-organized levy-based fundraising campaign	3 (3.8%)	4 (5.1%)	4 (5.1%)	43 (55.1%)	24 (30.8%)	4.03	1.00

The survey results clearly indicate that financial disparities significantly influenced the electoral performance of the APC and PDP in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections. Respondents strongly agreed that APC raised and spent more money on media airtime (Mean = 4.00, SD = 1.10), which enhanced its communication and mobilization efforts. Additionally, APC was perceived to have performed better in electoral mobilization across all 12 wards (Mean = 4.38, SD = 0.79), and to have organized more campaign rallies (Mean = 4.08, SD = 1.07). Respondents also agreed that APC effectively used both human and material resources to reach all polling units (Mean = 4.01, SD = 1.04). Furthermore, most respondents agreed their parties received grants and financial donations (Means = 4.29 and 4.49, SDs = 1.01 and 0.60 respectively), with well-planned fundraising campaigns organized to support electoral activities (Mean = 4.35, SD = 0.88). The ability to generate levies was also acknowledged (Mean = 4.15, SD = 0.97). The consistent means above 3.0 across all items and relatively low standard deviations reflect a strong consensus that APC's superior financial resources translated into better electoral performance, underscoring the decisive role of financial inequality in shaping political outcomes.

The financial advantage of the APC over the PDP in Malumfashi had clear implications for democratic fairness and electoral competitiveness. The ability of APC to mobilize more funds allowed it to dominate media presence, organize frequent rallies, and maintain widespread voter outreach factors critical to electoral success. This imbalance raises concerns about equitable political competition, as political parties with lesser financial resources may be marginalized regardless of their policies or popularity. Persistent financial inequality undermines voter choice and risks entrenching patronage systems where money, rather than merit or ideology, determines political power. Without effective regulation and enforcement of political party finance laws, such disparities could weaken Nigeria's democratic institutions, erode public trust, and perpetuate political exclusion and corruption.

RQ2: What role did political party financing play in the electoral performance of the APC and PDP in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections?

Statement	SD	D	UD	A	SA	Mean	SD
APC raised and spent more money than PDP in buying media airtime to communicate and mobilize electorates.	3 (3.8%)	13 (16.7%)	5 (6.4%)	30 (38.5%)	27 (34.6%)	3.82	1.16
APC had more vehicles to transport supporters to wards for campaigns and election mobilization than PDP.	9 (11.5%)	12 (15.4%)	8 (10.3%)	26 (33.3%)	23 (29.5%)	3.46	1.33
APC possessed more financial resources than PDP.	0 (0%)	4 (5.1%)	3 (3.8%)	53 (67.9%)	18 (23.1%)	4.10	0.76
APC had more logistics support to take care of its needs than PDP.	12 (15.4%)	10 (12.8%)	5 (6.4%)	27 (34.6%)	24 (30.8%)	3.33	1.44

The data show that political party finance played a critical role in influencing the electoral performance of APC relative to PDP in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections. The respondents largely agreed that APC raised and spent significantly more on media airtime (Mean = 3.82, SD = 1.16), which was essential for communication and voter mobilization. Similarly, APC's advantage in logistical support, such as having more vehicles to transport supporters (Mean = 3.46, SD = 1.33) and possessing greater overall financial resources (Mean = 4.10, SD = 0.76), underscores the financial disparity between the parties. Though agreement was somewhat lower for logistics support (Mean = 3.33, SD = 1.44), it still points to APC's relative strength in campaign infrastructure. All mean scores above the threshold of 3.0 reflect a consensus that financial and material advantages allowed APC to mobilize more effectively, contributing to its electoral success in the area.

The findings imply that financial strength and effective resource mobilization significantly influenced the electoral outcomes in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections. APC's ability to outspend PDP in key areas such as media airtime, transportation, and logistics gave it a substantial advantage in reaching and mobilizing voters across all wards. This financial disparity likely skewed the level playing field, undermining the principles of fair competition and possibly limiting the electorate's freedom of choice by amplifying the voice and visibility of the wealthier political party. Furthermore, it highlights systemic issues in Nigeria's political landscape, where monetary power often dictates electoral success rather than ideology or governance records, potentially perpetuating a cycle of patronage, political inequality, and weak democratic consolidation.

The findings reveal that APC's greater financial resources and logistical support gave it a significant advantage over PDP in voter mobilization during the 2023 elections in Malumfashi. This financial disparity undermined fair competition and influenced the electoral outcome in

favour of the better-funded political party. The findings of the study, which reveal that the APC's superior financial resources significantly influenced its electoral performance in Malumfashi during the 2023 general elections, align with broader scholarly discussions on the role of money in politics and the findings reveal that financial disparity significantly shaped the electoral performance of APC and PDP in Malumfashi, with APC consistently rated higher in funding-related activities such as media outreach, mobilization, and campaign organization. High mean scores (all above 4.0) and low standard deviations indicate strong consensus that APC's financial strength gave it a decisive advantage in the 2023 general elections.

Discussion of Findings

- i. **To what extent did financial inequalities (disparity) between the APC and PDP influence their electoral performance in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections?** The findings reveal that APC's greater financial resources and logistical support gave it a significant advantage over PDP in voter mobilization during the 2023 Malumfashi elections. This financial disparity undermined fair competition and influenced the electoral outcome in favor of the better-funded party. The findings of the study, which reveal that the APC's superior financial resources significantly influenced its electoral performance in Malumfashi during the 2023 general elections, align with broader scholarly discussions on the role of money in politics. Mendilow (2018) argues that financial inequality among political parties distorts democratic processes by creating uneven playing fields, particularly in developing democracies. This is evident in Malumfashi, where APC's funding advantage translated into superior media access, campaign logistics, and voter mobilization, mirroring Mendilow's assertion that money amplifies political messaging and outreach. Similarly, Gallego and Wantchekon (2017) emphasize that in low-income electoral contexts, financial strength not only boosts campaign visibility but also influences voter behavior through patronage and logistical efficiency both reflected in APC's performance relative to the PDP
- ii. **What role did political party financing play in the electoral performance of the APC and PDP in Malumfashi Local Government Area during the 2023 general elections?** The findings reveal that financial disparity significantly shaped the electoral performance of APC and PDP in Malumfashi, with APC consistently rated higher in funding-related activities such as media outreach, mobilization, and campaign organization. High mean scores (all above 4.0) and low standard deviations indicate strong consensus that APC's financial strength gave it a decisive advantage in the 2023 general elections. The study is in line with the position of Helmke and Levitsky (2021), who found that informal institution and the ways in which unwritten rules and power work shape electoral outcomes. The study's evidence of APC's financial dominance creating an unfair advantage demonstrates how informal practices such as unequal access to campaign finance can undermine formal democratic norms. Etzioni (2021) further critiques the moral implications of such disparities, warning that when money becomes the primary determinant of political success, democratic legitimacy is eroded. The perception among respondents in Malumfashi that financial power outweighed political ideas or meritocracy echoes Etzioni's concerns about the ethical decline in electoral competition. Together, these scholars provide a critical lens through which the Malumfashi case exemplifies the broader consequences of unchecked financial effect in electoral politics.

Conclusion

The 2023 general elections in Malumfashi revealed that the APC's electoral success was largely driven by its superior financial resources, which enabled more effective voter mobilization, media outreach, and campaign logistics, giving it a clear advantage in party finance over the PDP. This financial dominance significantly influenced the outcome and highlighted a deeper issue: the disparity in campaign funding not only shaped electoral performance but also compromised the fairness of the competition. These findings reinforce broader concerns that unequal access to political finance can distort democratic processes and undermine genuine electoral choice.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and conclusions drawn, the study is here by recommending the followings:

- i. There is a need for the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to enhance oversight by implementing stricter limits on campaign spending and requiring full disclosure of political donations and expenditures. Regular audits and penalties for violations would discourage excessive or opaque funding practices, ensuring a more level playing field for all parties.
- ii. To reduce the effect of private wealth in elections, government-backed support such as public campaign grants and subsidized media time should be stopped among all registered political parties. This would help less financially dominant parties engage effectively with voters and promote more issue-based, competitive, and inclusive elections that contribute to accountable governance.

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