

Sycophancy in Grassroots Political Participation and Its Effect on Consolidation of Democracy in Enugu State, South-East Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the scourge of sycophancy as a form of political behaviour among the grassroots populace in politics in Nigeria and its effects on the efforts at consolidation of democracy in Enugu State, South-East of Nigeria. The central objectives of this study are to find out the effect of praise-singing or flattery by sycophants on the number of projects or amenities provided to the people; to investigate the effect of tale-bearing or character assassination by sycophants on the number of people-oriented laws enacted by the parliament, and to assess the effect of book licking and fawning by sycophants on the number of lives or property saved from destruction by criminals. A quantitative research method is adopted for this study while a descriptive research design was used. A well-validated and pre-tested questionnaire was used to collect data. The reliability test showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.791, indicating high internal consistency. The questionnaire consisted of 22 close-ended items spread across two sections. From a population of 4,361, a sample size of 353 was determined using Kothari's Finite Population Correction Factor statistics. Descriptive statistics that consisted of frequency counts, tables, and percentages were used to analyze the data. Inferential statistics of multiple regression analysis was used in testing the hypotheses of the study. Both the analysis and tests were done with the aid of SPSS software. The study reveals that sycophancy as a form of political behaviour has been as old as politics and governance in Nigeria, starting from the colonial era, through several attempts at democratic rule, military interregnum, and up until the present Fourth Republic that was birthed in May 1999. More so, the study found that praise-singing or flattery by sycophants at the grassroots did not increase the number of projects or amenities provided to the people; tale-bearing or character assassination by grassroots sycophants have no positive effect on the number of people-oriented legislation enacted by the parliament, and bootlicking or fawning by grassroots sycophants do not significantly reduce the number of lives and property lost to criminals. To this end, the study recommended that influential political figures who are usually the targets or victims of sycophantic behaviour should learn to protect themselves against the selfish and harmful antics of sycophants by developing a strong critical mindset and attitude against the marauding sycophants who abound amongst the grassroots political players. The agencies charged with the responsibility of political education to intensify their advocacy campaigns against the evils of sycophancy in both politics and governance processes in the country.

KEYWORDS: Sycophancy, sycophants, politics, governance, political office-holder, influential political figure, grassroots, democracy, consolidation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In any political system, especially in a democracy, the constitution as the grundnorm usually spells out the mandate, duties or responsibilities of the various public offices it creates. It is exactly the foregoing, therefore, that forms the basis of how much members of the public expect from any public office-holder or the basis of the judgment of the performance of the latter by the time he or she renders account of stewardship at the expiration of his or her tenure. It is also foregoing that forms the basis of how much the same public expect any influential political figure or net worth business person currently out of the public office to give back to society. Against this backdrop, therefore, it also goes without saying that in civilized democracies, candidates at most public elections are usually elected into the public offices being sought, not on the strength of mere propaganda, but on the very strength of the people's perceived capability of the individual candidates to deliver on the mandates, responsibilities or expectations associated with the said offices. Similarly, it is also on the strength of concrete evidence that the incumbent public office holder has delivered on his electioneering promises or the

expectations of his office that he is re-elected for a second tenure or into much more challenging positions in future.

However, in developing countries, more particularly Nigeria, there has been a persistent distortion of the foregoing tradition of mandate-driven political leadership with the incursion of a decadent and self-serving parochial political behaviour known as sycophancy in the body politic and the governance process. In essence, there have been conflicting opinions regarding the consequences which sycophancy poses to politics, leadership, and the governance process in Nigeria. What exactly does the term 'sycophancy' mean?

Sycophancy like most terms or concepts in political behaviour lacks a precise definition. At best, most writers on the concept define it to suit their respective individual perspectives. However, in its simplest meaning, sycophancy has been described by Etim (2017) to mean a way of winning or currying favour from powerful and influential people through flattery and praise-singing; a cringing subservient attitude and a fawning obsequiousness that is meant to divert attention from the real pulse of the people. According to Etim, in sycophancy, a larger-than-life image is usually painted around the said influential figure, giving them the impression of indispensability or infallibility. Usually, a victim of sycophancy is led to take very unpopular decisions by sycophants who oftentimes masquerade as his or her followers or loyalists, with such unpopular decisions no matter how obvious, sincerely presented as the best overtaken by any man on earth. The point is that such unpopular decisions usually and ultimately lead to the "downfall" of the influential leader (Akam, 2010; Etim, 2017:3).

Investigations show that sycophants are driven by greed, selfishness, convulsive rapaciousness and geocentricism. Though they present themselves as patriots and lovers of their so-called godfathers and would want members of the public to see them as such, they are never patriots. Instead, they (sycophants) are mere bootlickers who hide under the cloak of patriotism to pursue a purely selfish agenda (Joseph, 1987).

Akam (2010:3) while dissecting the dynamics of what he called "sycophantic culture", identified three dimensions of sycophancy to include:

1. obsequious flattery: servility
2. false accusation: calumny and tale-bearing and
3. the character or characteristics of sycophants (fawning, bootlicking, brown-nosing, kowtowing, lackey, hangers-on etc). Towing almost similar line, Etim (2017) points out that sycophants usually deploy three distinct and interrelated tactics in their trade which include, praise-singing and flattery, tale-bearing and character assassination, and bootlicking and fawning.

Elaborating on the contextual traits that distinguish sycophancy from other forms of behaviour patterns, Ekon & Essien (2012) contend that a sycophant is a person or employee of sycophancy or a person who tries to win favour from wealthy or influential people by flattering them only to gain self-advantage. On the same note, Jhatial, Mangi & Ghumro (2012) hold that a sycophantic person acts towards someone powerful or strategic in a position of authority to gain an advantage in the form of promotion or good position in the industry.

Similarly, Oloja (2016) contends that sycophancy is insincere flattery of people of wealth or influence, thus corroborating the perspective of Akpogena (2013) that a sycophancy is a civilized form of insincerity through which, among other things, yes-men gain upward mobility from their position of supplication and, subservience. However, Jhatial *et al.* (2012), while elucidating on this, state that sycophancy is flattery, which is very obedient, or it is an indication of deference to another to gain an advantage, and to an excessive or servile degree.

The root of sycophancy lies in antiquity and it has remained a feature of human life; it transcends modern political practices and encompasses traditional political orientations (Akam, 2010, Okibe, 2020).

Sycophantic behaviour finds expressions in the nature of man. Aristotle underscored this perspective in an assertion that "man by nature is a political animal" (Jowett, 2015:19). By implication and based on the nature of politics in modern states, man is intrinsically selfish and crafty, always seeking self-fulfilling ambitions that usually disregard the interest of other competitors in the daily struggle for political space and access to scarce resources.

Undoubtedly, many aspirations and inordinate ambitions sooner than later metamorphose into sycophancy and differentiate the behaviours of those seeking a variety of advantages in the system (Henry, 2009). As a common ground for rent-seeking orientation, sycophancy serves as a vehicle for advancing personal interest in a game to outwit one another in vying for economic and political opportunities. Thus, politics provides the platform that generates conflicting goals, which in that trajectory dissolves into an intertwined network of disputed interests. It engenders self-centred behaviour that targets personal benefit and relegates whatever collateral damage it portends for public interests.

In Nigeria, sycophancy as a political behaviour dates back to the era of colonial administration. From the early dawn of colonial administration in Nigeria, a certain crop of colonial subjects used sycophancy to curry favour from the colonial governors. The traditional leaders, for example, used the ploy to displace

educated elements in attempts to preserve their powers and influence, and it led many Europeans to view nationalist struggle as not supported by the locals. Even among the educated class, some engaged in sycophancy to secure opportunities in colonial administration and thereby added to the numbers that posed a hindrance to rising opposition to colonialism.

Gradually and systematically thereafter, sycophancy assumed a very potent tool for extolling government's policies and programmes and actions (or lack of) of politicians and political office holders, all for the ulterior motive of seeking favour from the powers-that-be, irrespective of the very perception and opinion of members of the public (Okibe, 2016). When Nigeria gained independence in 1960, sycophancy aided the diversion of attention from steering the wheel of governance toward national growth and development and promoted egocentrism, ethnicism, nepotism, mutual suspicion, and politics of prebendalism among the class that inherited political leadership from the colonialists (Suberu, 2016; Joseph, 1987; Okolo & Oluregbemi, 2014). Ever since then, praise-singing, tale-bearing, and bootlicking in support of each political leader by people seeking personal favours had assumed some frightening dimension. It had also infected both the governing and non-governing elites and had diminished public trust in civil governance. It became common knowledge that sycophancy made the government operate in falsehood, relegated national interest and allowed personal ambitions to displace facts about the poor nature of governance in the country. The collapse of the First Republic and consequent military intervention drew much inspiration from sycophancy. Ditto the Second Republic, Third Republic, the subsequent military dispensations up until the present Fourth Republic (Etim, 2017).

Expectedly, empty heroic praises have continued to lure the government into taking despicable actions with defensive ploys to blindfold the public with a basket of lies. As a toxic substance, it pollutes the integrity of governance and exemplifies the bane of politics and leadership in post-colonial Nigeria. The point remains that today, sycophancy has grown into a festering sub-culture in Nigerian politics and governance such that it has threatened or sabotaged the current ongoing efforts to consolidate democratic rule in the country (Akam, 2010). This foregoing ugly trend has provoked spirited research efforts, particularly, this empirical study whose broad goal is to examine the effect of sycophancy as a form of political behaviour in the grassroots on the efforts at consolidation of democracy. The study, however, pursued three specific objectives. They include to:

1. find out the effect of praise-singing and flattery on the number of projects or amenities provided to the people implemented; 2. determine the effect of tale-bearing and character assassination on the number of people-oriented legislation enacted by the parliament, and 3. investigate the effect of boot-licking and fawning on the number of lives and property protected against criminality. The focus of this study was, of course, Enugu State, South-East Nigeria.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Worldwide, sycophancy haunts many political systems, infects governance with demeaning behaviours, and on that note has destroyed and still destroys the careers of many leaders, thereby leaving several of its victims in miserable condition despite their initial strength of character to offer good leadership.

In fact, sycophancy has become a recurrent monster both in the entire political process and governance and a virus in Nigerian leadership. Although fast developing into a subculture in Nigeria, there are disturbing assumptions that it is pervasive where there is a high proclivity to acquire material things, get access to corridors of power, get favour from the government and sustain a close relationship with those in power. There is this apprehension that sycophancy, which is a symbol of decaying national value in a political system, is becoming a norm in its governance, with much negative influence on leadership and followership.

As stated earlier, sycophancy as a form of political behaviour in the Nigerian context dates back to the days of colonial rule. In point of fact, it is on record that a good number of Nigerian locals employed the subterfuge of sycophancy in the form of bootlicking of the colonial administrators and character assassination against the Nigerian nationalists in asking for one favour or the other from the colonial administration. To that extent, therefore, an impression was severally created before the white colonialists that the said Nigerian nationalists were not carrying the mass of the Nigerian colonial subjects along in their struggle for independence. Consequently, the foregoing significantly sabotaged the efforts of the nationalists, and to that, extent stretched the struggle for independence to almost its breaking limit, thus prolonging the attainment of nationhood by Nigeria.

In 1960, Nigeria finally gained independence, thus marking the birth of the First Republic. It is arguable that all through the said First Republic, sycophancy aided and abetted the entrenchment of most of the various socio-economic and political ills that have since plagued the nation's polity until date. These maladies include egocentrism, politics of nepotism and favouritism, ethnic bigotry, mutual suspicion among the three major tribes, and prebendal politics, among others (Suberu, 2016, Anugwon, 2000; Ekeh et al, 2012). That the First Republic collapsed so soon in 1966 to herald the first military intervention is attributable to the handiwork of sycophantic politics.

In fact, amidst the turbulent developments in Nigeria in that inglorious era, sycophancy played a very critical role in attracting the military class into civil politics. No sooner had the military class taken over the mantle of political leadership and governance of the country than the same sycophants came on the stage again, this time in a much more ferocious and rapacious manner. For instance, aside from the posturing of sycophants here and there during the then Aguiyi-Ironsi, Gowon, and Murtala-Obasanjo regimes, it was from the days of the defunct Buhari-Idagbon military dispensation to the twilight of the existence of the military from governance in May 1999 that sycophants began to have a field day, to such extent of exerting arguably the greatest influence in manipulating successive national leaderships for personal gains.

It became a lucrative business with a speciality in applauding every policy introduced and project implemented by leaders (no matter how good or bad) as a cure to Nigeria's problems and very quick to lampoon critics despite the veil of selfish ambition shrouding the deceits.

For example, those who made Gen. Buhari believe that the War-Against-Indiscipline (WAI) and the Austerity Measure policies were the best in reviving the culture of decency, reinventing the economy and instilling consumption discipline in Nigerians were quick to discredit the policies after his overthrow in a coup. Not long, both WAI and the Austerity Measure programmes soon became unpopular, at least among the elites and it helped set the stage for Ibrahim Babangida's successful coup against the Buhari government in 1985 (Campbell, 2016). The reason for the hurried change was to demonstrate loyalty to the new administration and shift the focus of their sycophantic behaviours to new concerns of the emergent administration. Hence, in spite of the fact that Gen. Babangida was manipulating the transition to civil rule politics and exhibiting an annoying sit-tight mentality in power, sycophants praised his sordid policies and programmes to high heavens.

After the Gen. Babangida regime abolished all political parties and created the two defunct national parties, the National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in 1991, the Association for Better Nigeria (ABN) founded by Chief Arthur Nzeribe played similar sycophancy roles to the regime. The group displayed great determination to realize its set objectives by putting up billboards in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, that carried the message 'Four More Years', thus preaching that the military government should stay in power for another four years. Its primary objective was to keep Ibrahim Babangida in power and maintain the military administration that had governed Nigeria for so long, all for the personal gains of its members (Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada, 2004). Even when domestic and international pressures came heavily against the regime of Gen. Babangida, the persuasion of sycophants blinded the self-styled military president from leaving the stage even when the ovation had severely depleted.

The case of the then military regime of Gen. Sani Abacha was arguably the most painful. It was the same sycophantic propaganda that gave impetus to the formation of Youth Earnestly Ask for Abacha (YEAA) in 1997, led by one Daniel Kanu and primarily committed to urging Gen. Sani Abacha to run for Nigeria's presidency (Kayode, 2009). It placed billboards around the country, sponsored advertisements and editorials in the media to drum support for Abacha, and in consonance, coordinated the two million-man march as part of the campaign to compel him to accept to transmute from a military Head of State to a civilian President. Sycophancy also became so pervasive and infectious to the extent that the five political parties in existence then described as the "five leprous fingers of the same leprous hand" dropped their plans of fielding their respective presidential candidates and unanimously adopted Gen. Abacha as their sole presidential candidate (Amuwo, 2011; Ige, 1998: 31). In other words, the fact that some others threatened to commit suicide should Gen. Abacha refuse to oblige their request and that Nigeria should cease to exist if Gen. Abacha failed to be in the civilian presidency showed how sycophancy could mislead those in power (Okibe, 2016).

Since the return to civil rule in Nigeria in 1999, successive Residents, Governors, Honourable Members, and Council Chairmen have been finding it difficult to cope with the increasing gale of sycophancy in the system. Political jobbers easily penetrate the ranks of influential political officeholders to mislead government where there is public mistrust against its policies and programmes.

Again, towards the end of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo's administration before 2007, a third-term agenda was mooted and pursued the extension of his tenure beyond the two terms allowed by the constitution under the guise of a constitutional amendment (Etim, 2017; Okibe, 2016). Though that agenda was aborted, it cast doubt on the integrity and sincerity of African leaders, Obasanjo inclusive. Also, the last administration of then-President Goodluck Jonathan was not spared the antics of these hypocrites. For instance, groups were hurriedly formed to persuade him to re-contest that election, even though he had earlier intended to serve only one term in office, prior to the 2011 general elections. The most vociferous voice in those days came from Transformation Ambassadors of Nigeria (TAN). This group purportedly claimed to have collected up to 17 million signatures across the country in support of the president's second-term bid (Etim, 2017; Okibe, 2016). The outcome of that election in 2015 once again showed the deceitfulness of sycophancy.

If there is any constituency or political sub-unit the phenomenon of sycophancy has been nurtured to the status of a rampaging monster that literally walks on both legs, it is at the grassroots level where the Local Government Chairman rule the roost. For instance, immediately a typical local government chairman is elected,

hordes of thousands of poverty-stricken and jobless youths that abound in the local constituencies would swim around the former in their numbers to get enlisted in an ignoble job of sycophantic praise-singing, bootlicking, and tale-bearing in search of one personal favour or the other. Typically, the said Local Government Chairman in question would in return anoint and appoint some of these youths Hon. Councillors and supervisors, and several others, his Executive Assistants (EAs) at a monthly paltry stipend of Ten Thousand Naira (N10,000) per head. As part of his schedule of duties, the youthful sycophant is expected to show up anywhere the Council Chairman is attending any engagement, be it at the Local Government Headquarters or social function to participate in the cacophony of praise-singing and flattery and rolling and twinkling on the ground in sheer obeisance to the "Digital Mayor" (as the Local Government Chairman is fondly known among his sycophants). Regrettably, it does not matter to the council boss whether the Ten Thousand Naira monthly stipend or the "item-7" plate of jollof rice, few bottles of beer and a T-shirt occasionally doled out to the youthful sycophant is enough for routine upkeep of himself and his family members, let alone preparing him towards earning a profitable living in future. The foregoing is the problematique of this study.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Methods and Design

The research method adopted by this study was the quantitative method, while the research design of the study was sample survey research. In the said survey, data were collected through a structured questionnaire.

Sampling and Sample Size Determination

A multi-stage sampling method was used for the selection of a representative sample. This sampling method is chosen because it is an advance of the principle of cluster sampling. The method is recommended for big inquires extending to a considerable large geographical area (Kothari, 2004), like the case of most studies, which is rural access roads and farmers in south-east Nigeria. The merits of this method are that it is easier to administer than most single-stage designs, and a large member of units can be sampled for a given cost because of sequential chartering, whereas this is not possible in most of the sample designs three states.

In the first stage, the purposive sampling technique uses used to select the appropriate group in the study area that is most directly involved in grassroots politics in Nigeria, particularly in the study area. In the first stage, six (6) sample units were selected as follows: INEC, PDP (6 Wards EXCOs, Enugu State), ALGON, Enugu State House of Assembly (ENHA), All Nigerian Conference of Political Parties (ANCPP), and National Orientation Agency (NOA) in Enugu State. The population for the six sample units was 4,361.

From this population, a sample size for the study was determined using Kothari's Finite Population Correction Factor statistics, whose formula is given by:

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{e^2} \quad (\text{Kothari, 2004}).$$

At the significance level of 5% (0.05) and confidence level of 95% or 1.96, 50% (0.5) proportion of an attribute of the population (p), and 50% (0.5) proportion of an attribute of the population, not present (q) i.e. I-P, and 5% desired level of precision (e), the estimated sample size was 353. The Sample Size for the study was, therefore, 353.

Data Collection

Data primary data and secondary data were collected by the study. The primary data were collected using a well-structured questionnaire that consisted of closed-ended items. The said questionnaire was piloted at three (3) sample units for purpose of test-retest measurement. Results of the reliability test carried out on the questionnaire showed a Cronbach's Alpha Index of 0.823, which is well above 0.7 universal benchmarks and, therefore, considered good enough for the field survey. The questionnaire was administered to 353 respondents across the six sample units using both self-administration and electronic means.

Data collected included those on the demographic characteristics of the respondents such as age, gender, marital status, education level, and income level of the farmers, among others. Data were also collected on the research constructs of the study such as praise-singing and flattery, tale-bearing and character assassination, and bootlicking and fawning, among others.

Method of Data Analysis

Responses of the respondents were first coded into data using the Excel Spreadsheet. The resulting data were analysed using descriptive statistics which consisted of percentage, frequency counts, tables, mean, and coefficient of variation. Inferential statistics known as stepwise Simple Linear Regression Analysis was used in testing the three hypotheses put forward for the study. In fact, this said Regression Model was used to examine and establish the nature and degree of relationship between sycophancy and dividends of democracy.

Analytical Model

The objective of inferential analysis at play was, of course, to establish whether there is a systematic relationship between the condition of rural access roads and farmers’ agricultural productivity level; and if there is any relationship whatsoever, to find out the degree of such relationship. A close look at the foregoing shows that many inter-dependent variables are at play and to that extent, its resolution calls for a statistical model that is also multivariate in nature. It is, therefore, for this purpose that a Multivariate Simple Linear Regression model was chosen for the analysis. The model was selected because the variables at play satisfied the three stipulated principles (i) there is only one dependent variable, (2) the dependent variable was not only parametric but can also be numerically measured, (3) these are more than one independent variables.

Social science researchers commonly describe the different ways they measure things numerically in terms of scales of measurement which come in three flavours: nominal, ordinal, and interval of ratio scales (Brown 2001). Each is useful in its way for quantifying different aspects of variables.

Model Specification

The model for the Simple Linear Regression Analysis chosen for this study would be collectively specified as follows:

$$Y = a_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 \dots \beta_n X_n + u \text{-----(i)}$$

In respect of the dependent variable and the individual independent variables, the model could also be specified as follows:

$$Y = a_0 + \beta_1 X_1 \dots \beta_n X_n + U_n \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad \text{(ii)}$$

$$Y = a_0 + \beta_1 X_2 \dots \beta_n X_n + U_n \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad \text{(iii)}$$

$$Y = a_0 + \beta_1 X_3 \dots \beta_n X_n + U_n \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad \text{(iv)}$$

In the four equations (i, ii, iii, and iv), the various notations are represented as follows:

Y = dependent variable (dividends of democracy, proxy by, people-oriented projects and amenities, people-oriented laws passed, and a number of lives and property protected).

a₀ = autonomous level of the dependent variable (dividends of democracy) that is not in any way influenced by the various independent variables.

β₁ – β₃... β_n = co-efficient of the independent variable, i.e. degree of the influence of the variable

X₁ – X₃...X_n = independent variables (praise-singing and flattery, tale-bearing and character assassination, bootlicking and fawning).

U = stochastic term, i.e. unexplainable factors that were acting outside the model (Gaussian white noise).

Decision Rule

The following hypothesis criteria were followed in the tests:

1. Reject the null hypothesis, where the beta term, β ≠ 0, then accept the alternate hypothesis.
2. Reject the null hypothesis, where p<0.05, then accept the alternate hypothesis.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results: Relationship between sycophancy and dividends of democracy.

1. Hypothesis No. 1

i: Praise-singing and flattery did not increase the number of people-oriented projects and amenities provided.

Table 1: Model summary

Model Summary (Goodness of Fit)

Model	R	R Square (R ²)	Adjusted R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.403	.162	.157	9.07299

a. Predictors (constant): Praise-singing and flattery

Table 2: ANOVA^b

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	6.125	2	6.125	74.402	.083 ^a
	Residual	2.470	303	8232		
	Total	8.595	305			

a. Predictors (constant): Praise-singing and flattery

b. Dependent variable: number of projects and amenities provided

Table 3: Coefficients^a

Model	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig.
(Constant)	1.697	9.663		17.566	.000
Praise-singing and flattery	-.068	.053	-0.084	-1.291	.083

a. Dependent variable: number of projects and amenities provided

2. Hypothesis No. 2

ii: Tale-bearing and character assassination never increased the number of people-oriented laws enacted.

Table 4. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square (R ²)	Adjusted R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.309	0.095	0.089	3.91023

a. Predictors (constant): Tale-bearing and character assassination

Table 5: ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4,841	2	4,841	.317	.613 ^a
	Residual	9,428	303	1.529		
	Total	9,428	305			

a. Dependent Variable: Number of laws enacted

b. Predictors: (Constant), Tale-bearing and character assassination

Table 6:Coefficients^a

Model	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig.
(Constant)	4.720	7.648		.617	.518
Tale-bearing and character assassination	.273	.064	.224	4.260	.613

a. Dependent variable: Number of laws enacted

3. Hypothesis No. 3

iii: Bootlicking and fawning least reduced the number of lives and property protected from criminals.

Table 7. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square (R ²)	Adjusted R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.462	0.214	0.209	2.29686

a. Predictors (constant): Bootlicking and fawning

Table 8: ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	43041	2	4.304	.816	.433 ^a
	Residual	15833	303	5.276		
	Total	58874	305			

a. Predictors (constant): Bootlicking and fawning

b. Dependent variable: Number of lives and property protected.

Table 9:Coefficients^a

Model	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig.
(Constant)	1.651	2.601		6.346	.008
Bootlicking and fawning	-0.141	.055	-0.161	-2.577	.433

b. Dependent variable: Number of lives and property protected

V. DISCUSSION

Results of the analysis presented in Table 1 with regard to the first hypothesis showed that bush-paths as praise-singing and flattery as the independent variable was able to explain about 15.7% of the behaviour of several projects and amenities provided since the adjusted coefficient of determination (R²) was 0.157. This suggests that the remaining 84.3% of the behaviour of a number of projects and amenities provided could be attributed to some other deleterious factors that operated outside the regression model.

Table 2 showed that the explanatory variable (predictor) contributed significantly to the model with an F-ratio measure of 74.402 and a p-value of 0.083, which is greater than 0.05 (p=0.83>0.05). This clearly falls

within the acceptance region of the hypothesis; which means that the research hypothesis should be accepted. Table 3 on its own showed that when the number of projects and amenities provided increased by 1, praise-singing and flattery decreased by 37.228 coefficients.

With regard to Hypothesis No. 2, table 4 showed that tale-bearing and character assassination was able to explain 8.9% of the behaviour of the number of people-oriented laws enacted since the adjusted coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.089. The foregoing means that the remaining 91.1% of the said behaviour of income level of rural farmers could be attributed to certain factors operating outside the regression model. Table 5 showed that the independent (predictor) variable contributed as little as 0.317 to the model and a probability value (p-value) of 0.613, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05 (i.e. $p=0.613 > 0.05$). The foregoing results clearly fall within the acceptance region of the research hypothesis, which means that we should accept the hypothesis of this research. Table 6 also showed that as the number of people-oriented laws enacted increased by 1 coefficient, tale-bearing and character assassination decreased by 10745.897 coefficients.

Furthermore, the results of the analysis performed on the data collected with respect to hypothesis No. 3 as presented in Table 7 showed that bootlicking and fawning as the explanatory (predictor) variable was able to explain about 20.9% of the behaviour of a number of lives and property protected since the adjusted coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.209. This suggests that the remaining 71.9% of the behaviour of the number of lives and property protected since the adjusted coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.209. This suggests that the remaining 71.9% of the behaviour of the number of lives and property protected could be attributed to factors that operated outside the regression model for the research. Table 8 also showed that the predictor (explanatory) variable contributed as little as 6.346 and a p-value of 0.433, which is greater than 0.05 stipulated significance level of 0.05 (i.e. $p=0.43 > 0.05$). The foregoing result clearly falls within the acceptance level of the research hypothesis, which means that we should, therefore, accept the hypothesis of the research as earlier put forward. Table 9 also showed that when total agricultural exports increased by 1 coefficient, tarred roads decreased by -19.395 coefficients.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study examined the effect of sycophancy on the part of grassroots followers of political office holders on the efforts at consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. Drawing from its major findings, the study reached a number of conclusions.

First and foremost, this study concludes that praise-singing or flattery of political office holders by political sycophants in the grassroots did not increase the number of projects or amenities provided to the people by the former. Secondly, the study also concluded that tale-bearing or character assassination against perceived opponents of political office holders by their sycophantic followers in the grassroots had no significant positive effect on the performers of legislators. Thirdly, the study also reached the conclusion that bootlicking or fawning over political office holders by political sycophants in the grassroots never reduced the number of lives lost and property destroyed in society.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

As investigations by this study have shown, sycophancy on the part of perceived followers or loyalists of certain influential political figures or political office holders in Nigeria has right from the First Republic up till this Fourth Republic that birthed in 1999 militated against the efforts at consolidation of democracy. The scourge of sycophancy is not insurmountable. To this end, therefore, the following measures are recommended as reliable antidotes against the aforementioned scourge.

First and foremost, influential political figures or political office holders should, as part of the challenge of responsible politics and governance, cultivate that strong critical mindset that easily predisposes one to always remain circumspect or cautious in dealing with fellow human beings, especially one's perceived followers, loyalists. With such a strong critical mindset, the influential political figure or political office holder will no doubt be in a better position to see through any of the antics or theatricals of any sycophant posing as his or her follower or loyalists. To that extent, the political figure should learn to keep such sycophant at bay or refrain from doling out any benefits to him. In this regard, influential political figures or political office holders should at all times critically assess any of their followers to see if a follower fits into the garb of the typical biblical Philistine who in the day-time would sing Hosanna Filia Davido (Praise the son of David) to Jesus Christ and at right turns to sing a different tune of crucifige eum (crucify Him) to the same Jesus. It goes without saying that once any sycophant becomes aware that his tricks or antics have been punctured, he would waste no time desist from practising such any further.

Secondly, in the face of the increasing evil effects of sycophancy on the Nigerian polity in general and the current democracy in particular, both government agencies and non-governmental bodies charged with political education should, therefore, rise up to fight the menace. Such agencies like INEC, NOA, political parties, and NGOs should, on none hand, see it as one of their bounden responsibility to constantly educate or

re-orientate influential political figures or leaders on the need and ways of cultivating strong critical minds against sycophancy. The purpose is for them to remain focused on actualizing their good intentions, particularly their electoral campaign promises to the people. Similarly, they should also, on the other hand, re-orientate sundry followers or loyalists of influential political figures against the dangers which they are engaging in the art of sycophancy poses to their immediate or future wellbeing such as losing the patronship or benefaction of their leaders should their antics get exposed somewhere along the line or at the end.

Thirdly, the aforementioned agencies should also organize special periodic advocacy programmes on the dangers posed by sycophancy to the Nigerian polity in general. In one respect, the act of praise-singing and flattery, for instance, tends to becloud an average influential politician or political office holder from eliciting the very yearnings and aspirations of his people against which he was in the first place elected into power or enthroned into a position of influence. This being the case, his tenure predictably ends up characterized by general ineptitude, irresponsiveness, and waywardness. In another respect, the aforementioned man of influence may get accustomed to praise-songs and flattery from his follower-sycophants and with time might develop a pathological aversion or intolerance to constructive engagements, including constructive criticisms, legislative oversight, and other opposing views. The point again is that this pathology may, with time, degenerate and fester into some dictatorial tendencies which might conspire to finally spell doom to the nascent democracy like that of Nigeria.

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