

Electoral Integrity, Voters' Confidence and Good Governance in Nigeria: A Comparative Analysis of 2015 and 2019 Presidential Elections

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Abstract

Most scholars of electoral politics regard election as the institutionalised means of mass political participation as well as holding government accountable by citizen in a democracy. Elections globally are marred by serious problems. Nigeria is not immune from these global challenges. These challenges manifest in the forms of over-shooting of the campaign finance, breach of political broadcasting codes, unreliable voters register etc. Specifically, Nigeria's fourth republic in which six presidential elections had been conducted presents reasonable cause for logical introspection towards boosting integrity of the electoral process. Nigeria incorporated technology into the electoral process to improve voters' registration. Also, smart card-reader machines are now used in the voting process as additional measure towards revamping the integrity of the electoral process. This research examined the relationship between and among the variables of electoral integrity, voters' confidence and good governance in Nigeria. As a multivariate study, the research adopted the mixed research method in which data were qualitatively and quantitatively analysed. The study drew a population of 1200 respondents from three states in Nigeria (Kwara, Ekiti and Rivers) using the Taro Yamane statistical formulae. To complement these, forty-five interviewees were purposively selected for Key Informant Interviews (KII). The study is situated within the prisms of the Rational Choice theory. Findings from the study revealed significant joint impact of electoral integrity and voters' confidence on good governance in Nigeria. The study recommended the need for significant improvement in the integrity quotient of elections as precondition for the global desire for good governance.

Keywords: Election; Electoral Integrity; Voters' Confidence; Good Governance; Legitimacy; Democracy

INTRODUCTION

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In the pre and post-colonial era in Nigeria the electoral process were characterised by exclusion of Nigerians in the election to the legislative council in 1910, followed by the prescription of income as a determinant of franchise in the 1922 Clifford constitution at which the Northern protectorate was not represented. Subsequent constitutional developments in the Richard, Macpherson, and Lyttleton constitution also had different deficiencies that promoted lack of confidence and integrity in the electoral system. It was also laced with electoral violence. It would be recalled that democratic dispensations after independence, that is, the First, Second, and the aborted Third Republics were cut-short by military coups and counter-coups. The

Fourth Republic which commenced in 1999 after the conclusion of the 1999 general elections has been the longest stable in the country's electoral history.

From independence to the present Fourth Republic, Nigeria has witnessed nine different presidential/general elections. However, since 1999 elections have been stable and are conducted on regular basis. From 1999 till date the country's electoral body has organised and conducted six different general elections. These are 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and the 2019 general elections. The integrity standard of these elections is, however, a source of worry to political actors and observers both local and international. For instance, the 2003 general elections were characterised by discontent from political contestants, voters, and observers. The 2007 general elections were described by some analysts, election observers, and political actors as the worst in the country's electoral history. This was reflected in the series of litigations that trailed the announcement of results and declaration of winners, nullification of results, and ultimately election-related violence which occurred at all the stages of the electoral process (Nwolize, 2007p.163). The 2007 general elections apart from being characterised by all sorts of electoral vices (Nwolize, 2007p.168) were accompanied by a high degree of electoral violence.

Nigeria's return to democratic rule dates back to May 29th, 1999 and in its wakes, the country's through its Election Management Bodies, (INEC) has conducted six (presidential elections) general elections namely: 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 respectively. However, before 2015 the country has not been able to conduct free, fair, and credible elections. The inability to conduct an itch-free election is not only peculiar to Nigeria. It is a political phenomenon across the globe. The only difference is the intensity, forms in which electoral violence is happening across countries of the world. For analytical clarification, this paper was divided into section; following the introduction is the objectives of the study; research questions; conceptual clarification and conceptual framework of analysis; test of hypothesis on research question; a comparative analysis of 2015&2019 presidential elections in Nigeria; major findings; recommendations and conclusion.

OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

Research Objectives

1. The main objective of this research work is to examine the nexus between/among electoral integrity, voters' confidence, and good governance in Nigeria.
2. The subsidiary objective is to comparatively analyse 2015 & 2019 presidential elections in Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. The issue of electoral integrity has catalysed a growing body of research among both the academic and policy-making communities. This has started to explore many issues, focusing upon one main research questions. What are the nexus between/among electoral integrity, voters' confidence, and good governance in Nigeria?
2. What similarities or differences existed between the 2015 and 2019 presidential elections in Nigeria?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As a multivariate study, the research adopted the mixed research method in which both primary and secondary sources of data were qualitatively and quantitatively analysed. The study drew a population of 1200 respondents from three states in Nigeria (Kwara, Ekiti and Rivers) using the Taro Yamane statistical formulae. To complement these, forty-five interviewees were purposively selected for both Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews (KII).

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

The Concept of Democracy

Political philosophers that included Plato, Aristotle, Montesquies, Bodin were concerted by defining democracy from different perspectives. The word democracy is derived from the Latin words demos that means people and also kratos that means to govern or to rule. Democracy was defined by a great American President Abraham Lincoln as “the government of the people, by the people and for the people” (1863 p.7). This is the widely reference definition of democracy. Several other definition of democracy has emerged. Plato, in the 5th Century B. C. The Athenian great philosopher and political thinker. According to Plato,(375BCp.8) “democracy is the gentle art of gathering votes from the poor and campaign funds from the rich by promising to protect each from the other”. Amao, (2003 p. 4) defined democracy ‘as a collective system which tries to maximise peoples’ welfare’. It’s a reactionary political idea. Stemming from these the original conception of democracy, it can be referred to as majoritarian

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rule. In addition, democracy has been defined in terms of procedural rules by which a polity is governed. In most contemporary democracies the major process by which governments are changed and important decisions made is through periodic elections, referendum, or plebiscite.

The Concept of Elections

Election all over the world is regarded as the foremost and the most peaceful means of changing governments in a democratic setting. It provides the citizens the opportunity to determine who governs them as at when and how. Election in the twenty-first century has been seen as the most veritable way of selecting leaders and the most veritable means of participating in the governance process in any country. In recent times, the election has become a tool for legitimating government leadership even when the government has not adopted democracy in principle and practice. Whenever there are controversies in election politics, judiciary mediation is inevitable. Election is a deeply rooted conditionality in a democratic society that is enshrined in the constitution of the country. Usually an electoral body or commission that would oversee it is also stated. In Nigeria, the 1999 constitution stated that elections must be organised by INEC. In modern states elections are held periodically and it ranges from one country to another. (Ejue and Ekanen, 2011 p. 4; Birch and Muchlinski, 2017 p. 6).

In Ghana, Nigeria, USA it is a cycle of four years. It is seven years in China and in the UK, India which practices the parliamentary system, it takes place as soon as the ruling party loses its majority in the parliament. The age of participation is prescribed and it 18 in many cases, the political parties field candidates and the electorates shall have the freedom to vote anybody of their choice. In some countries like the USA, independent candidacy is allowed in which any citizen can contest without the platform of a political party. In some countries only one party exists and in some there are two dominant parties while in others many parties contest the elections. (Hamalai, Egwu and Omotola, 2017 p. 9). The critical requirement for an election in the best global practice is that it should be free, credible and fair. When these values are upheld the government will enjoy the confidence of the people who shall be assured that the mandate which they gave them freely can be withdrawn during another round of elections to another party or another candidate. (Dahl, 1971 p. 6; Oni, Chidozie and Agbude, 2013 p. 8; Ojo, 2008 p. 6; Cohen, 1983, p. 55; Hughes & May, 1988 p. 20).

The Concept of Legitimacy

Legitimacy is considered as a sine qua non to acceptance of a government, a strong belief that the will of the electorates sustain and it results in stability of the society. (Rothstein 2009 p. 313). Scholars agreed that when a government is considered legitimate, schism will be low and resort to repression by the government shall not ensue (Scharpf, 1999 p. 9).

The Concept of Electoral Integrity

Scholars on this issue concentrated more on what integrity is not, rather than what it is. On the one hand, Schedler, (2002 p.12) and Birch (2011 p. 6) believe that the behaviour of incumbent government on the seat in trying to manipulate the choice of electorates by setting legal framework and influencing electoral umpires to design a slanted system which compromise the principle of fair play and puts a stain on electoral integrity. On another hand, the Inter Parliamentary Council (1994) asserts that organising a free and fair election where the electoral procedure is followed amounts to what electoral credibility connotes. This includes an up to date register of voters, free expression of franchise by all citizens that have attained the prescribed age of adulthood, vote sorting and counting without hindrance and announcement of results fairly.

Norris (2014 p.21), Elklit & Svenson, (1997 p. 32) Bishop & Hoeffler, (2014 p.8) were in alliance that when elections were held and concluded without intimidation and violence and the citizens were convinced that their votes translated into the results that were announced then it would be said to have credibility. They opined that when elections conform to the prescription of the UN and it is acclaimed by the political actors, the electorates, journalists and scholars, it would be said to uphold integrity. They insisted that conformity to the process of the elections is what constitutes integrity. Some scholars including Alvarez, Atkeson & Hall, (2012 p. 7); Munck, (2009 p. 6; O'Donnell, (2001 p. 5) contend that the legal framework and domestic regulations that guide the election procedure as well as the general conduct and administration of the elections constitute the yardstick to measure integrity.

Electoral integrity can be defined "as a holistic or comprehensive observance of the electoral laws guiding electoral conduct of a country throughout the electoral cycle

through which a collective will of the people can be achieved and upon which the election can meet international standard". What is most significant is these definitions are that it encompasses the nomination process and election cycle leading to good governance. In the acceptance of the necessity to uphold integrity, academics designed a methodological and theoretical basis to assess it through the Electoral Integrity Project (EIP), at the Harvard University and the University of Sydney in Australia that was coordinated by Pippa Norris. It is notable that their academic exercise had continued to gain international recognition and followership in the global arena including the US, Nigeria, Mexico etc. Their measures are being used by domestic and international observers to assess elections and the electoral procedure. It gives them the exactitude to describe the electoral process as fair, credible, free or tainted by manipulation, malpractices or fraud. (Bjornlund, 2004 p.6; Reynolds, 2005 p. 4; Young, 2009 p. 4; Vickery and Shein, 2012 p. 4). They emphasised that these yardsticks would assist the security agencies and the judiciary to track and exert sanctions on offenders of the electoral procedure. And the press would continue to spread the message of malfeasance in the electoral procedure.

The Concept of Voters' Confidence

Voter's confidence in the electoral system is interchangeably used to denote the level of trust that the electorates have in the electoral process. (Coleman & Manna 2000 p.7; Bowler and Karp 2004 p.7; Price & Romantum, 2004 p.7 Hansen, 2002 p.8). Confidence in the electoral process is very important because, it is the determinant of the perception of the citizens and how much support and assistance they lend to the governance process. And ahead of governance, the trust that they build on the process that determines to a large extent the peace, harmony and concord that would exist within the society. On the other hand, the catastrophe and pandemonium that they inflict on the process before, during and after elections, It is also a function of their confidence in the process. (Miller, 1974 p. 6 Easton 1965 p. 7; Nye, et al, 1997 p. 4; Hetherington, 2005 p. 9). Scholars contend that what constitutes voters' confidence are varied but it is a function of how well and effectively that the electoral body charged with that responsibility performed on their assignments and how well the government supports and distances itself from actions that undermine the voting pattern and change its outcome.

While events from the developed democracies have shown a steady rise in the confidence of voters in the process of elections, the developing world including Nigeria, Belarus, Uganda, Afghanistan have shown acts that does not make the votes of the electorates to count. The consequence of these is that violence erupted at different stages of the electoral process pre, during, and post-elections. It's also lamentable that the governance system is negatively affected. Delivery of the dividends of democracy for which a government is voted for is reduced and insecurity of lives and property which is the primary duty of the government is heightened. (Dalton, 1999 p. 3; American National Election Studies, 2007 p. 2; Hill 1981 p. 5; Rahn, Brehm, & Carlsin, 1999 p. 4 Price and Romantan, 2004 p. 3.) In essence, the trust that citizens effect on the electoral system translates to the level of support that they give to the government and governance process. (Koehler,2009 p.4; Bratton et al 2005 p.3). Further, scholars believe that voters' confidence can aggregate from either support for the system of government that is emplaced, the political leaders and contestants. Similarly, the familiarity of the voters with the procedures of elections, the trust in the efficacy and efficiency of the technology adopted and promptitude and exactitude of voting scores that was announced affect their confidence in the electoral process.

Determinants of Confidence

Trust and confidence in an electoral system is not static. It is contingent on time and some variables they might intervene to direct the view of the voters. The critical issues that determine the confidence that the people express in the electoral system are: One of these issues is when a scandal occurs at any level of the cycle. For instance if the hope and confidence of the people had been kindled during the voters registration, but they realise on election day that under age pupils or non nationals have been stuffed in, this shall definitely affect their confidence. Also, finance that is devoted to campaigning is a strong factor that imbues confidence in the mind of the voters. It should be regulated and monitored so as not to result in vote buying that shall reduce the confidence of the voters. If the electoral law is followed throughout the electoral cycle, the electoral integrity would be high and vice versa. When the campaign is based on issues and the language of communication is issue based and polite rather than personal attacks, the voters and observers would have confidence in the procedure. Before, during and after elections, political communication should be based on ideas that can further the growth and development of the society. When the electorates lose trust at any point of the electoral cycle, it would ultimately, reduce their confidence. When the

EMB is perceived to be independent, it would elicit the confidence of the voters. Once the electoral laws are unbiased and it is applied accordingly, voters' confidence would be high. Voters' familiarity with the electoral process, the perception of such voters is high and vice versa. A helpful poll worker who offers guide and assistance to the aged and illiterate voters, would be seen as helping to increase the confidence of the voters and even the observers if and when they make a visit to his polling booth. Furthermore, voter familiarity with the electoral process, general opinion about the voting technology, party identification with the winner/or losers' effect, voting method, age and gender.

Effects of Voters' Confidence on the Political System

1. Voter's confidence improves the legitimacy of the government in the political system.
2. When the level of support is low i.e. voter's confidence, the survival of the political system is threatened.
3. When the voter's confidence is low, the system's institution would be constrained.
4. Unfavorable outcome of public policy or public policy outcome..
5. When the voter's confidence is low, there would be a higher tendency of deviant behaviour of the citizens. In Nigeria the increase in the activities of Boko Haram, the IPOB and the Fulani herdsmen devastation are classical examples of behaviour arising from loss of confidence in the leadership.
6. When voter's confidence is high in the electoral process, it helps to improve governance.
7. When confidence is high, it increases level of political participation of the citizens.

The Concept of Good Governance

Academics did not attach much premium to the definition of good governance. Rather emphasis was devoted to what constitutes the concept. To Alkali, (2004 p. 45) good governance occurs when the political authorities exercise their political power to create growth and development, operate within the precinct of the rule of law; allow their citizens to enjoy the fundamental rights of choice, association and expression; principle of transparency and accountability is upheld. Babawale, (2007 p. 7) was of the

view that good governance is done when the government does not condone corruption and promotes accountability; when access to and dissemination of information is not impeded and repression of dissenting voices are not the order of the day.

The aggregate yardstick of scholars is that good governance encompasses eight characteristics. The first is that the citizens should have a say in putting in place the government; Secondly, the political leadership should respect the fundamental rights of the people and respect their humanity. The security and judicial system should not be biased and should uphold the rule of law without fear or favour. Thirdly, the government and its actions should be transparent. Fourthly, the institutions of the state should offer their services without discrimination. Fifthly, there should be a reasonable consensus on what to do, when to do it and how to achieve it. In this sphere, the parliamentarians which are the direct representatives of the people must not be conscripted or muzzled within the whims and caprices of the executive nor judiciary. Sixthly, Governance process should be equitable and just. Seventh, the available resources should be used effectively and efficiently to provide the best services for the citizens. Finally, accountability takes a high premium in the elements of good governance.

Analysis of the 2015 & 2019 Presidential Elections in Nigeria

Electoral officials, voting materials, and voters were secured in the 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria. Simply because I Voted in Kwara State and observed things within the Babooko ward, it was a peaceful election and going by the various reports by both domestic and international election observers in the 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria. Besides, if one tries to analyse electoral security one needs to examine the spate of political and electoral violence throughout the electoral cycle in the 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria. This can be supported by the observation of EU, EOM that the 2015 general election was peaceful with high performance by the security agencies with high level of integrity. Also, Commonwealth observers expressed the same opinion which corroborated the above report. They specifically noted that although there were operational inadequacies, according to them, but the elections were largely transparent and peaceful and fulfilled the test of credibility and integrity.

Electoral officials, voting materials, and voters were not secured in the 2019 Presidential Elections in Nigeria it was rancorous my opinion was based on the election

administration reports by Nigerian Newspapers and the domestic observers in the 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria. According to these reports there were violence in some states such as Kaduna, Imo, Abia, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Borno, and Anambra during the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria. With the relative peaceful conduct of 2015 general elections, the expectation of Nigerian electorates and non-Nigerians was that the 2019 general elections would be better.

The 2019 general elections were therefore supposed to be a consolidation of the gains made in 2015 but instead the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room's (NCSR) (2019) Observation of 2019 general election revealed serious shortcomings that questioned the credibility of the entire exercise. Among conditions stipulated by Situation Room and supported by international community that makes an election free, fair and credible and coined as "Threshold Document for a Credible Election includes Non-Partisan Security Agencies, Voter Register Integrity, Card Reader failure during elections, Transparent Results Collation, Efficient and Accountable Election Administration political parties, no restrictions on opposition campaign and violence mitigation and electoral accountability. These standards were group under obligations to be propelled by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the political parties, the security agencies and other state institutions. This can be corroborated by the summation of (Adebiyi, 2020 p.11) that the 2019 presidential election were not perfect in all ramifications as there operational shortcomings, electoral security challenges and low turnout.

Moreover, this is further exemplified by the opinion of (Onapajo, 2020 p.1) the state security personnel, responsible for securing the environment for a credible election, were again at the centre of controversies. Allegations of partisanship trailed the conduct of the security agencies to such extent that the public perceived the large presence of the security agencies as a calculated attempt or strategy to intimidate voters. However, despite the huge presence of security officials, the election was still marred by violence that led to a number of deaths and arson attacks on the EMB facilities. Series of violence occurred in the 2019 elections, although with lesser cases of post-election violence experienced in 2011. The situation room, a local civil society group, reported that 626 lives were lost in the election process, including the pre-election campaign period and during the election. (Sanni cited in Onapajo, 2020 p.365) Unfortunately, voters' turnout was abysmally low in comparison with the previous elections. With a 35% voter turnout, the country witnessed the lowest turnout

in the continent, which speaks to the growing public disenchantment and mistrust in the electoral process. (Ojetunde, 2019 cited in Onapajo & Babalola, 2020 p.364).

Theoretical framework of Analysis

A theoretical framework is the template that sets the guide, investigative instruments and the pattern upon which a research would be accomplished. In this study, INEC, which is saddled with the conduct of the elections, is influenced by several factors that prepare the template for them to conduct credible, fair and free elections. From this premise this study considered the rational choice theory, the principal agent theory or agency theory and theory of liberal democracy. *And the study adopted the rational choice theory.*

Rational Choice Theory

This theory which originated from the works of Anthony Downs, (1957, p. 8) employed the approach of political economy to decipher the pattern of voter's choices during the election in a particular environment or political system. He stated that voters decide who and which party they would cast their ballot for on either economic reasons, the dividends of democracy that they hope to enjoy or the political offices they expect to occupy (Arrow, 1986 p. 8). However with special reference to Africa, Lindberg & Morrison, (2008 p. 6) were of the opinion that religious consideration, regionalism, ethnic and clan chauvinism and patronage play a significant role in deciding who they vote for.

Assumptions

Four assumptions underlined the theory. First is that the individual voter considers his welfare and interest as paramount to decide his choice at elections. Second, is rationality which emphasizes on the efficiency and effectiveness of the decision to vote for a party or a candidate on the basis of who gives them the greatest satisfaction. Third is optimality which emphasizes that individual voters maximize their opportunity in their actions, intentions, inactions and circumstances before they vote for a party or a candidate. Fourthly, is the self regarding interest. Herein, this implies that voters cast ballots for a particular candidate or party at the expense of others by utilising their rational reasoning with the best practices to promote peace, stability, growth,

development and democratic sustenance in a political environment (Lindberg & Weghost 2010, p. 7).

Criticisms

Notwithstanding the assumptions highlighted, critics maintained that individual voters through a motley of factors that include vote-buying, feeding on election day, fake promises etc can vote for a wrong party or candidate who lacks the capacity to perform his assignment in either the legislative or executive arm of government. The concept of rationality is subjective. A programme in the manifesto of a political party that is considered rational by one voter might be seen as irrational by the other voter. Also they neglect the idea of joint or joint leadership within the neighbourhood as a factor in voting since it is an accepted dictum that no man is an Island.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

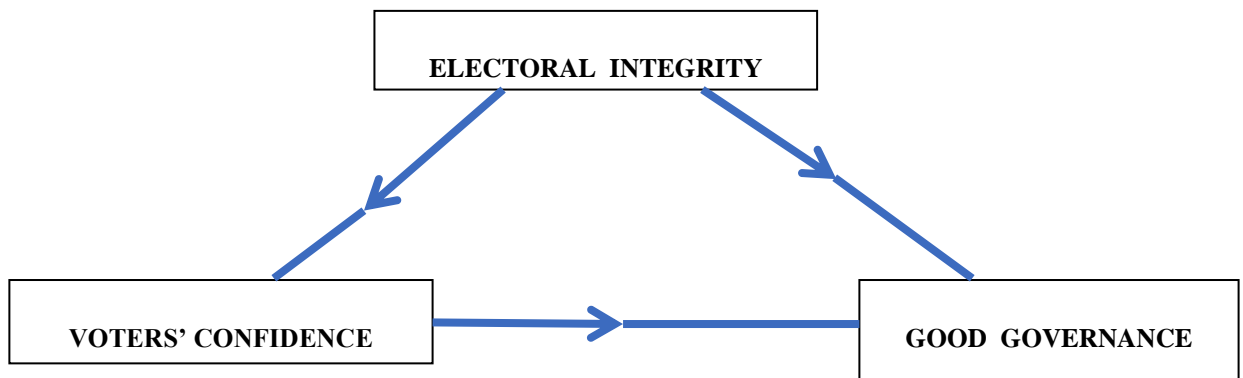


Figure 1: The Linkage between Electoral Integrity, Voters' Confidence and Good Governance

Source: PLSM / SPSS Output

The study finds out that electoral integrity is positively related to voters' confidence, and voters' confidence is also positively related to good governance in any social setting. While electoral integrity is also positively related to good governance. It shows that electoral integrity and voters' confidence are good determinants of good governance in any social setting. Statistically, our flow chat shows the relationships

between these latent variables (Electoral integrity, voters’ confidence, and Good Governance), Electoral integrity contribute 0.777 to the model, out of 0.777, 0.4138 has a direct contribution to good governance and indirectly contribute 0.3632 to good governance through voters’ confidence i.e. the higher the quality of Electoral integrity the more confident the voters has in the system of election or electoral system and the better good governance the system produced.

The integrity in electoral process is considered as the fundamental principle that runs throughout the electoral cycle right from the nomination of candidates by the political parties, the campaign exercise, the conduct of elections proper and the declaration of election results up till litigations on the election if any there were i.e. electoral dispute. When these procedures is followed fairly, firmly, and transparently by the EMB and all other participants in the process it would result into an election that would be seen as credible and upholding international standard of democratic practice. These situations would necessarily elicit the confidence of the voters in the political system and imbue legitimacy of the government which is the fundamental attribute of good governance.

Table 1: Measurement of Electoral Integrity Comparative Analysis of Electoral Integrity in 2015 & 2019 Presidential Electoral in Nigeria.

S/N	Dimensions of Electoral Integrity	Kwara 2015	State 2019	Ekiti 2015	State 2019	Rivers 2015	State 2019
1.	Application of Electoral Laws.	355	320	371	300	380	355
2.	Electoral Procedures.	900	900	850	800	800	800
3.	Electoral District Boundary.	245	250	352	260	300	300
4.	Voters Registration Procedures (V. Register)	294	300	360	330	355	360
5.	Party Registration & Candidates Selection.	551	608	512	650	560	700
6.	Media Coverage i.e. Political broadcast & Advertisements.	300	230	291	250	300	250
7.	Political Party Campaign Finances.	360	380	328	370	380	360
8.	Voting Process Procedures.	363	230	310	220	363	208

9.	Vote Count (Election Monitors: Domestic and international)	380	300	326	336	900	400
10.	Post-Election Outcome & Dispute Settlement).	504	664	501	638	800	900
11.	Electoral Authority / Election Administration (EMB)	320	250	365	296	350	250
12.	Electoral Security.	327	250	375	250	300	250

Source: Researcher Field Survey, 2019

From the above table, one can deduced that the electoral law were fair to all political parties in Nigeria especially the 2015 Presidential Election was conducted in accordance with the electoral laws as contained in the Electoral Acts guiding the operation of INEC and the general public and all stakeholders in the election. To a very large extent, there was substantial compliance with the electoral laws and going by the various reports of both domestic and international election observers on the 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria. This can be supported by the findings of Onapajo, H.(2015 p.7) that electoral reforms produced good results. He asserted that what gave credence to the integrity of the 2015 presidential election was the outstanding demonstration of statesmanship by President Jonathan who congratulated General Buhari ahead of the declaration of the entire results. Scholars, international and domestic observers, as well as NGOs were in concord that the electoral reforms that was started by President Yar'Adua and concluded by the incumbent was highly impactful in the success of the election.

Electoral officials, voting materials, and voters were secured in the 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria. Simply because I Voted in Kwara State and observed things within the Babooko ward, it was a peaceful election and going by the various reports by both domestic and international election observers in the 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria. Besides, if one tries to analyse electoral security one needs to examine the spate of political and electoral violence throughout the electoral cycle in the 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria. This can be supported by the observation of EU, EOM that the 2015 general election was peaceful with high performance by the security agencies with high level of integrity. Also, Commonwealth observers expressed the same opinion which corroborated the above report. They specifically noted that although there were operational inadequacies, according to them, but the elections were largely transparent and peaceful and fulfilled the test of credibility and integrity.

Further more in 2019, I equally voted in Kwara State Ilorin to be precise, the INEC and other stake holders in election administration and management tried as much as possible to followed the electoral laws and INEC guidelines were strictly adhered to at least to the best of my observed areas in Ilorin west local government area of Kwara state. But to my chagrin and dismay going through the newspaper reports as well as both the domestic and international election observers, Kwara state was better off with the pockets of violence reports that followed the election in 2019. This can be corroborated by public comments and election observers' reports, the 2019 general election (presidential election) did not meet the records of 2015 elections. Nigerian were dissatisfied with the management of the elections by Election Management Bodies (EMB), the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). INEC battled with logistical problems and administrative deficiencies that impacted negatively on the quality of the election. The logistical challenges caused a sudden postponement of the presidential election six hours before its commencement on 16 February 2019. The postponement significantly dampened public expectations about the prospects of the electoral system. The elections were followed with reports of disenfranchisement as a result of the arbitrary cancellations of poll results, over spurious or frivolous reasons by the EMB. This is more problematic as most of the cancellations occurred in areas considered as strongholds of the opposition parties.(Onapajo,2020p.1) Adebisi,(2021p.11) concluded that 2019 presidential election were not perfect in all ramifications as there were operational shortcomings, electoral security and low turnout.

Electoral officials, voting materials, and voters were not secured in the 2019 Presidential Elections in Nigeria it was rancorous my opinion was based on the election administration reports by Nigerian Newspapers and the domestic observers in the 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria. According to these reports there were violence in some states such as Kaduna, Imo, Abia, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Borno, and Anambra during the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria. With the relative peaceful conduct of 2015 general elections, the expectation of Nigerian electorates and non-Nigerians was that the 2019 general elections would be better. The 2019 general elections were therefore supposed to be a consolidation of the gains made in 2015 but instead the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room's (NCSR) (2019) Observation of 2019 general election revealed serious shortcomings that questioned the credibility of the entire exercise. Among conditions stipulated by Situation Room and supported by international community that makes an election free, fair and credible and coined as "Threshold Document for a Credible Election includes Non-Partisan Security Agencies, Voter

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Table 2: Measurement of Voters’ Confidence in 2015 & 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria. Comparative Analysis of Voters’ Confidence in 2015 & 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria.

S/N	Dimensions of Voters’ Confidence	<u>Kwara</u> 2015	<u>State</u> 2019	<u>Ekiti</u> 2015	<u>State</u> 2019	Rivers 2015	<u>State</u> 2019
1.	Vote Count	350	327	393	271	360	200
2.	Confident with the Electoral Authority or (E.M.B)	300	250	270	200	380	250

3.	Confident with the Electoral Officials	360	218	269	250	350	208
4.	Confident with Electoral Outcome	338	324	371	291	363	200
5.	Reflection of the popular will of the Voters'	355	200	379	108	355	200
6.	Electoral Manipulation	186	340	125	284	150	350
7.	Free, Fair, and Credible Election	332	180	359	170	390	180

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2019

From the above table, eighty percent of our respondent unanimously agreed that our vote did count. As a professor of political science, and as a voter, I voted and I believed my vote did count in the 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria. And from the trends and patterns before, during, and after, one would find out that the election counted that opposition defeated incumbent and its acceptance by the incumbent president, by that it shows that votes counted. It is an accepted reality, both the domestic and international election observers attested to this. However, the whole process was transparent and the results of the election were announced after the counting of the votes at the polling units, ward collation centre, local government collation centre, state collation centre, and finally at the situation room at Abuja. i.e. National collation centre. To me, am very confident that my vote counted in the 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria. Though, I personally voted and observed the 2019 presidential election in Ilorin Kwara state capital at Baboko ward precisely at polling Units 012 Ode Onitangaran and throughout all other polling units in Babooko ward in Ilorin west area of Kwara state, the election went on smoothly in my area. However, there are a lots of reservations about the 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria.

However, a lot of things went wrong with the election, for instance it was criticized to have low public trust, which is a wider concept than voters' confidence in election, the citizen's trust in democratic institutions and electoral processes in Nigeria has been on a downward trend since democratic transition in 1999. Surveys demonstrate rising public dissatisfaction(lack of confidence) in the Nigerian state due to bad governance, failure to deliver on promises and perceived partiality of state

institutions, including those related to election (Bratton & Gyimah-Boadi, 2016). This has accounted for growing political apathy and aversion to democratic principles by the citizens. The 2019 general elections experienced the worst voters' apathy in the history of the country. In fact President Muhammed Buhari was re-elected by just 18% of registered voters in Nigeria, while only 35% registered voters voted in the election (Akinyemi, 2019 cited in Onapajo 2020 p.365). Moreover, 2019 Presidential election was described as rancorous by scholars and observers alike, Electoral violence has been the hallmark of election in Nigeria. It was responsible for democracy breakdown in the previous democratic experiences. Since the transition to democracy in 1999 elections have been marred by violence due to a low level of democratic culture. A similar pattern of violence occurred in the 2019 elections although with lesser cases of post-election violence we experienced in 2011 presidential elections in Nigeria. The situation Room a local civil society group, reported that 626 lives were lost in the electoral process including the pre-election campaign period and during the election or voting day perse. (Sanni, 2019 cite in Onapajo, 2020 p. 365)

Table 3: Measurement of Good Governance in Nigeria 2015-2019

S/N	Dimensions of Good Governance	Kwara State	Ekiti State	Rivers State
1.	The Level of Accountability	230	212	130
2.	The Level of Transparency	230	202	150
3.	Efficiency and Effectiveness in Public Management and Administration	230	220	120
4.	Responsiveness to Human Rights	224	230	110
5.	Observation or compliance with of Rule of Law	222	300	100
6.	The Level of Infrastructural Development	200	213	260
7.	The Level of Bureaucratic Development	260	206	270
8.	Fight Against Corruption	209	230	150
9.	Performance of the National Assembly (Parliament)	300	202	350
10.	Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Democratic Institutions	400	362	380

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2019

From the above table, the assessment of accountability level was above average and I don't see much accountability, the accountability level of President Muhammadu Buhari Administration 2015-2019 was nothing to write home about. The various loots recovered were not made known to the general public and what use do they put the loot recovered for. Another example was the current corruption scandal going on in the Niger Delta region of the country. Despite the loot recovered the administration still went ahead to engage in excessive borrowing, not only that they still increase the pump price of PPMS as well as electricity tariff in the country. This was not what Nigerians bargained for before 2015. The rule of law was poorly observed by President Muhammadu Buhari's Administration 2015-2019. Well, the application of rule of law was close to zero, for instance for men of the Department of State Security (DSS) to invade court premises to re-arrest was major wrongdoing of the administration. That is the height of impunity, besides the issue of El-Sharkishaky, Dasuki, Sowore e.t.c. This administration chooses which courts order to obey and which one not to obey. That was a slap on the judiciary, and there is nothing anybody can do about it. The observance of rule of law by the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari was closed to zero and that was the greatest undoing of his administration.

Their legislation was very responsive to the wishes of the electorate. They work at the logger's head with the executive. It was the best in terms of legislative and oversight functions. It was very responsive and shows a clear separation of power between the executive and the legislature. As far as the Nigerian assembly is concerned 8th assembly was the best so far in the country. Well to the best of my knowledge, the 8th National Assembly was the best and its legislations were very responsive. Even in terms of oversight functions. It was very responsive to the basic yearnings and aspirations of the people. It was the best so far! The Various legislations of the 8th National Assembly were very responsive. Though They conflicted with the executive, and laws that did not favour the executive were sidelined while Buhari vetoed over 40 bills that were passed including the much-awaited petroleum industry bill. However, it is on record that legislative achievements of the 8th Senate surpassed their predecessors. Their legislation was very responsive to the wishes of the electorate. It was very responsive to the people's yearnings. The 8th assembly was the best as far as the legislative house was concerned in Nigeria. It has the highest number of bills passed. It was per excellence it shows a clear separation of power and checks and balances interplays, unlike now 9th National Assembly where the house was bought

over. It was described as an extension of the executive arms of the government in Nigeria and the various legislations of the 8th National Assembly in Nigeria were responsive to the basic yearnings of the Nigerian electorate. In terms of performance, the 8th National Assembly stands the best. That was how a national assembly should be. It should not be a rubber stamp institution at any rate.

Analysis of the Relationships among three Variables

Objective1: The objective of this research work is to examine the nexus between/among electoral integrity, voters' confidence, and good governance in Nigeria.

Test of Hypothesis on Research Question One

Test of Hypothesis on Research Question One was done using Multiple Regression Analysis (Pearson Product Moment coefficient) The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

R.Q.1. What is/are the nexus between / among electoral integrity, voters' confidence, and good governance in Nigeria?

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Joint Contributions of Independent Variables to the Prediction of Good Governance in Nigeria

Model	R	R.Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error of The Estimate
1	.348	.121	.119	9.01162

Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
1 Regression	8899.924	2	4449.962	54.796	.000
Residual	64723.756	797	81.209		
Total	73623.680	799			

Source: SPSS Output/ Researcher's Field Survey, 2019

The above table shows that the Multiple Regression (R) indicating the relationship between independent variables (Electoral Integrity and Voters' Confidence) and the dependent variable (Good Governance) is .348, R² is .121, Adjusted R² is .119, and Standard Error is 9.01162. This implies that the predictor accounted for 11.9 percent of the variance in good governance. Furthermore, verification (ANOVA) produced F (2,797) = 54.796; (P<0.05). This indicates that variables are joint predictors

of Good Governance. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This means that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the predictions of dependence is significant at 0.05 level.

Table 5: Relative Contribution of Each of the Independent Variables to the Prediction of the Dependent Variable

	Unstandardised	Coefficients	Standardised		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig
1(Constant)	3.821	2.482		1.540	.124
Electoral Integrity	.342	.129	.282	8.014	.000
Voters Confidence	.148	.040	.129	3.666	.000

Source: SPSS Output/ Researcher’s Field Survey, 2019

The result of the table above shows the relative contribution of each of the independent variables to the prediction of the dependent variable. Electoral integrity has the greatest contribution to Good Governance (B=.282, t=8.014, P<0.05) followed by Voters Confidence (B=.129, t=3.666, P<0.05).

Analysis of Objective 2: The subsidiary objective is to comparatively analyse 2015 & 2019 presidential elections in Nigeria.

A Comparative Analysis of the 2015 and 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria.

The 2015 Presidential Election was initially scheduled to hold on February, 14th 2015 and was postponed till March, 28th 2015 and it was well administered. The reasons for the postponement were due to security challenges in the country then following a meeting of the council of the state where it was reported that the security chiefs could not assure of security if the election were to be held on an earlier date. While the 2019 Presidential Election which was scheduled for February 16th, 2019 was however postponed to the 23rd of February, 2019 by the INEC around 03:00 am on the original polling day, giving logistical inadequacies in getting election materials to polling destinations.

The number of registered political parties in the 2015 General Election was fourteen (14) and the number of political parties that contested the 2015 presidential

election was fourteen (14). While the number of registered political parties for the 2019 general election was ninety-one (91) and the number of political parties that contested for the 2019 presidential election was seventy-three (73). The interpretation of this was that, there was an increased political participation in Nigeria than that in the 2015 Presidential Election. The number of registered voters for the 2015 (General Election) Presidential Election in Nigeria was 67, 422, 005. While, The total number of voters registered for 2019 Presidential Election was 84,004,084. The total number of voters turn-out of the 2015 Presidential Election was put at 29,432,083 with 43.65%. While the total number of voters turn-out of the 2019 Presidential Election was put at twenty-nine million three hundred and sixty-four thousand, two hundred and nine (29,364,209) with thirty-five-point-fifty-six-percent(35.56%). The 2015 Presidential Election was transitional, while the 2019 Presidential Election was a consolidatory election.

The 2015 Presidential Election was well administered and meet the international standard for electoral integrity as it was adjudged credible by the reports of both domestic and international election observers. On the other hand, another group of respondents with a frequency or response rate of six-hundred and ten (610) with seventy-six-point-three percent (76.3%) declared that they were confident that the outcome of the 2015 Presidential election reflects the true will of the voters in Nigeria. While the 2019 Presidential Election was not well administered and failed to meet the international standard for electoral integrity. The electoral outcome of the 2015 Presidential Election reflects the true wills of the Nigerian masses or voters' from the result of voters' confidence measurement. On the other hand, another group of respondents with a frequency or response rate of six-hundred and ten (610) with seventy-six-point-three percent (76.3%) declared that they were confident that the outcome of the 2015 Presidential election reflects the true will of the voters in Nigeria. While the outcome of the 2019 Presidential Election does not reflect the true will of the Nigerian masses or voters' from the result of voters' confidence measurement in 2019. An absolute or overwhelming majority of our respondents with a frequency of six-hundred and ten (610) with seventy-six-point-two-percent (76.2%) declared that they were not confident that the outcome of the 2019 Presidential election reflected the true will of the masses of voters in Nigeria.

The 2015 Presidential Election was relatively peaceful considering the reports of both domestic and international election observers in Nigeria. Whereas the 2019 Presidential Election was rancorous and largely un-peaceful considering the voting day

report by all domestic election observers reports. As well as international election observers report on the 2019 General Election in Nigeria. Moreover, the gravity of electoral violence reported occurring at pre-election, during the election, and after. The comment in the election observers' reports both domestic and international was positive for the 2015 Presidential Election. While the comment in the election observers reports both domestic and international was negative for the 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria.

The ballot papers used for 2015 Presidential Election was moderate and easy for voters to understand it was sizable, this can be supported by the opinion pool that declared that five hundred and seventy-three respondent (573) with seventy-one-point-six-percent (71.6%) unanimously agreed that the ballot paper used for 2015 Presidential Election was easy for the voters to understand. Finally, this can also be supported by the number of invalid votes in 2015 in which the figure was put at eight hundred and forty-four thousand five hundred and nineteen (844519). While the ballot papers used for the 2019 Presidential Election were too cumbersome or too long and confusing to the voters especially the illiterate voters in Nigeria. However, this also can be supported by the opinion pool that four hundred and fifty-five respondents (455) with fifty-six-point-nine-percent (56.9%) agreed that the ballot paper used for the 2019 Presidential Election was too cumbersome for voters to understand. Finally, this can be supported by the number of invalid votes in the 2019 Presidential Election in which the figure was put at one million two hundred and eighty-nine thousand–six hundred and seven (1,289,607). However, this figure was considered higher when compared with the 2015 figure.

The 2015 Presidential Election was better secured by the security agents that were involved in the election then. While the 2019 Presidential Election was not better secured considering the electoral violence that trailed the conduct of the 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria. The 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria did not witness or the result was never challenged in the court of law for the first time in the history of election in Nigeria where the opposition party will defeat the incumbent political party and the candidate, as well as the party, will accept defeat without post-electoral violence in Nigeria was never anticipated. While the 2019 Presidential Election result was challenged by both the candidate and the political party in Nigeria was a negative index of electoral integrity measurement worldwide and coupled with

the various election observers reports on the 2019 General Election in Nigeria that gave a submission that it failed to meet international standard and lack credibility.

In submission, another criterion for comparison was the opinion pool that argued that four hundred and sixty respondents (460) with fifty-seven-point-five percent (57.5%) declared that fraud does not likely affect the electoral outcome of the 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria. While four hundred and ninety-four respondents (494) with sixty-one-point-seven percent (61.7%) declared that fraud likely affected the electoral outcome of the 2019 Presidential Election in Nigeria.

Major Findings

1. There is a significant joint contribution of electoral integrity and voters' confidence to good governance in Nigeria.
2. The 2015 presidential election meet international standard of election integrity while 2019 presidential election did not or was less transparent.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The paper recommends that to achieve good governance the quality of electoral integrity and voters' confidence at an election should be improved considerably in Nigeria. *The study recommended the need for significant improvement in the integrity quotient of elections as precondition for the global desire for good governance.* The study has examined the interrelationship between electoral integrity, voters' confidence, and good governance in Nigeria between the years 2015-to-2019. Going by the findings and results of the study, it's clear that the research questions raised by this study have been properly answered and it can be concluded that there is a joint contribution of electoral integrity and voters' confidence in the achievement of good governance in Nigeria and the study has also made it clear that for any nation to achieve good governance, it has to improve the electoral integrity of its electoral process as well as voters' confidence in the electoral process of the country. The study provides an x-ray and assessment of the quality of elections in Nigeria from independence till date and concludes that of all the elections conducted in Nigeria, the 2015 presidential election was the most generally acceptable to be free, fair, and credible.

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