

**ELECTIONS AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY
OF TWO GENERAL ELECTIONS (2019-2023) IN EDO STATE**

BY

**OKUNDIA JOSEPH OSAMUDIAMEN
(PG/SSC/09100579)**

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY**

DECEMBER, 2025

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**BEING A RESEARCH THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
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AWARD OF MASTER OF SCIENCE (MSc) DEGREE IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS
AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

DECEMBER, 2025

DECLARATION

I declare that this study was carried out by me, **Okundia Joseph Osamudiamen** and it is original in score and content.

Okundia Joseph Osamudiamen

Date

CERTIFICATION

We the undersigned certify that this research work titled “**ELECTIONS AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TWO GENERAL ELECTIONS (2019-2023) IN EDO STATE**” was carried out by Okundia Joseph Osamudiamen in the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Science (MSc) degree in Comparative Politics and Development Studies.

Dr. O. G. Igiebor
Supervisor

Date

Dr. O. G. Igiebor
Ag. Head of Department

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my dearest Princess Isoken Emma Okundia and Prince Iredia Ryan Okundia my greatest blessings. May my words inspire you to dream big and chase your passion.

I love you more than words can say.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of elections on national security in Nigeria, with particular reference to the general elections in Edo State. It focused on four key objectives: examining the impact of electoral credibility, evaluating the role of voter education, assessing the effects of electoral violence, and determining the implications of electoral malpractices on national security. The research adopted a survey research design, which enabled collection of data through quantitative and qualitative means. The quantitative data were gathered through the use of Likert style questionnaire while the qualitative data were gathered through interviews with Key Informant Interview (KII) regarding their perceptions of electoral processes and its effects on national security. The study was guided by system theory and human security theory, which explain how the interaction between political institutions, citizens, and governance structures affects societal stability and individual safety. This study's population is made up of the men and women of voting age in Edo State which is 453,592 while the sample size for this study was 400 using the Taro Yamane formula. Three hundred and fifty six (356) respondents responded to the copies of questionnaire administered while twelve (12) interviewees responded to the interview guide. The findings revealed that electoral credibility is very significant in maintaining national security. The study also found that voter education contributes to national security by improving citizens' understanding of the electoral process and discouraging manipulation and participation in political violence. The study recommends that strengthening credible electoral processes, enhancing voter education, and addressing electoral violence and malpractice are essential for promoting national security and democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Elections are a cornerstone of democracy, providing citizens with the opportunity to choose their leaders and influence the direction of governance (Mamabolo, 2024). Elections are a series of events that result in the selection of one or more individuals from among many to hold positions of power within a particular society. Free, fair, and credible elections are associated with democratic governance, peace, and development, according to political scientists and development theorists (Orji, 2021). Thus, a free, fair, and credible election serve as the foundation for the establishment of legitimate, accountable, and democratic administrations that are able to establish and carry out well-defined national security for developmental programmes.

Once again, free, fair, and credible elections give the people the power to demand that future government representatives have solid qualifications and a workable development plan in order to keep the government responsible (Kaburu, 2022). To put it another way, elections provide governments the rightful power to both create and carry out policies and give individuals the ability to hold governments responsible for their deeds or inaction. Therefore, democratic governance, political stability, national growth, and security are all dependent on credible elections in a given political system (Ayogu, Egbara & Aleje, 2019).

Unfortunately, electoral fraud, ethnic and primal chauvinism, poor leadership, and a corrupt court have tarnished and exacerbated Nigerian elections rather than enhancing them. Conflicts, intimidation, violence, identity disputes, mistrust, accusations, counter-accusations, protests, and political killings have all resulted from this, creating a never-ending cycle of violence that threatens the election process. Undeniably, seven general elections in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011,

2015, 2019 and 2023 have taken place in the Fourth Republic of Nigeria, and they are all characterised by violence before, during, and after the election (Sanni, 2019).

To buttress more on the culture of political violence in Nigeria, Campbell (2019) asserts that one characteristic that sets Nigerian elections apart is election violence. In Nigeria, elections are fiercely competitive and winner-take-all affairs. They are regularly and consistently accompanied by violence because there is so much at stake. Politicians are more inclined to take advantage of regional, cultural, religious, and ethnic distinctions in order to forward their own agendas. In addition to targeting other candidates and their followers, they incite animosity within the community. It is difficult to downplay the legitimacy of Nigeria's democratic processes because Nigerians frequently bear the repercussions.

Nigeria's elections, which are obligatory by the constitution, influence the country's political, social, and economic development. Nonetheless, Nigerian election administration has been plagued with enduring issues that have a direct impact on national security. Political thuggery, ethnic and religious tensions, ballot box snatching, voter intimidation, electoral violence, and result manipulation are some of these issues (Madueke & Enyiazu, 2025). In Nigeria's political landscape, the nexus between national security and election processes has grown in importance, calling for careful considerations and strategic reactions (Garnett & James, 2021).

Security remains dominant among the many challenges to the electoral process. It has been adjudged by organizers of elections, contenders of political offices and the electorates as a pre-condition for a successful election. After all, it is practically impossible to hold credible elections in an insecure state. According to Adichie (2023), national security is a term that both leaders and followers of the law use to describe the state of not being physically harmed or losing cherished values such as political stability or regime security, the nation's territorial integrity and

sovereignty, economic reliance, environmental sustainability and safety, and the preservation of the people's cultural heritage. Furthermore, Okorie, Michael, and Eze (2020) assert that achieving national security depends on achieving other state objectives, including scientific and technological development, economic dependence, military dominance, political stability, effective and efficient natural resource exploration, national unity, agricultural and food sufficiency, favourable diplomatic relations, and more. Because of this, national security is a broad term that impacts both leaders and followers.

A major factor in the effective implementation of national security is the calibre of political leadership that results from the elections. Therefore, in contemporary political cultures, elections are a crucial democratic framework for selecting leaders. It functions as a tool for accountability, political mobilisation, and choice (Idowu, 2023). It serves to legitimise current regimes and makes the transition from one civilian authority to another easier in contemporary democracies. Development results from free, fair, and credible elections in democracies because the leaders chosen are answerable to the people and sensitive to their demands. But when the opposite occurs, it hinders progress and thus jeopardises national security (Awofeso & Odeyemi, 2016).

Unfortunately, elections are typically marked by desperation, especially in developing nations like Nigeria, given the necessity of elections in a democratic environment as the means of gaining political office and the political economy of the Nigerian state. Therefore, rather than being a legitimate force and political asset, elections have turned into a political liability and a cause of crises (Pedley, 2024). Nigeria's electoral democracy experience, which began in 1959, has shown that the political class is fiercely competitive for power, leading to a variety of electoral irregularities and violence (Yoroms, 2019). Similar to this, Yunusa (2016) noted that Nigeria's varied experiences with competitive electoral politics have resulted in the worst forms

of political thuggery, brigandage, rigging, manipulation of election results, snatching ballot boxes, arson, wanton assassination of perceived political opponents, and unrestrained and unmediated destruction of property and lives, among other things.

Elections continue to have a huge impact on governance and, consequently, national security because the public becomes disenchanted with government policies, alienated from their leaders, and strongly apathetic towards the electoral process (Igiebor, 2022; Yagboyaju & Akinola, 2019). These phenomena have recurring and disastrous effects on inclusive governance, public safety, and the state, which emphasises how important national security is to the soul of a nation's development and stability.

National security encompasses the protection of a nation's sovereignty, territorial integrity, institutions, and the safety of its citizens from internal and external threats (Rahman, 2023; Wyrebek, 2022). Banditry, abduction, armed robbery, insurgency, and separatist agitations have all become more significant threats to Nigeria's national security (Mou, 2018). These risks frequently increase during election seasons as violent organisations may take advantage of the situation to further destabilise areas and political actors take advantage of unrest to win votes (Okorie, Michael & Eze, 2020). As a result, the election process turns into a possibility for violence and instability in addition to being a political affair.

Historically, elections in Nigeria reflect a troubling pattern of violence and insecurity. From the post-independence elections of the 1960s to the recent general elections, incidents of election-related violence have remained a recurring problem. For instance, the 2011 general elections were followed by widespread post-election violence, particularly in the northern parts of the country, resulting in significant loss of life and property (Ojo, 2016; 2011). Similarly, the 2019 general elections were plagued by militarization, voter suppression, and violent clashes in several

states (Oyeyipo & Oluku, 2019; Adenyi, Onyia & Namchi, 2019). These occurrences demonstrate how fragile Nigeria's electoral system remains and how national security can be severely compromised during democratic transitions.

Bakare, Akinyetun and Ahoton (2020) observed that the nexus between elections and national security in Nigeria is bidirectional. On one hand, insecurity undermines the credibility of elections by limiting voter turnout, disrupting electoral logistics, and creating an atmosphere of fear. On the other hand, flawed and poorly managed elections can lead to grievances that fuel conflict and unrest. Political exclusion, perceived injustice, and electoral malpractice can deepen existing divisions and drive individuals or groups to violent resistance. This complex dynamic underscores the need for robust electoral reforms, stronger institutions, and effective security arrangements during election periods.

Ensuring free, fair, and peaceful elections is essential not only for democratic consolidation but also for national stability and development. As Nigeria continues to grapple with its complex security challenges in her electoral journey, the imperative to secure the electoral process becomes ever more urgent for national security. A secure electoral environment is fundamental to sustaining democracy and ensuring the peace and unity of the Nigerian state.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Elections in Nigeria pose critical national security problems, including widespread electoral violence, voter intimidation, ballot box snatching, manipulation by political elites, ethnic and religious tensions, weak institutions, vote buying, and mistrust in electoral bodies. These challenges undermine democracy, fuel insecurity, and threaten the stability of the Nigerian state. Bleck & Van de Walle (2019:49) argued that Africa has witnessed an "institutionalisation of elections without democratization". In Nigeria, elections are often accompanied by significant

security challenges that threaten the stability, unity, and democratic integrity of the nation. Despite successive democratic transitions since 1999, the country continues to experience widespread electoral violence, political thuggery, voter suppression, and manipulation of results, all of which compromise national security. Instead of being a peaceful means of leadership selection, elections have in many cases become sources of conflict and insecurity. The general elections in Nigeria has witnessed large-scale violence, destruction of property, and loss of lives, particularly in regions already grappling with ethnic, religious, or political tensions.

The persistent involvement of security agencies in partisan activities, the proliferation of arms during election periods, and the recruitment of unemployed youths as political thugs highlight the dangerous nexus between politics and insecurity in Nigeria (Adebayo & Abiem, 2025). Furthermore, insurgent groups such as Boko Haram and armed bandits have taken advantage of electoral periods to launch attacks, disrupt voting, and instill fear among citizens, especially in the North-East and North-West regions (EU-SDGN, 2023). These recurring patterns of violence and insecurity erode public trust in the electoral process, discourage voter participation, and weaken democratic institutions. In turn, flawed elections breed grievances that escalate into long-term instability. In addition, the lack of accountability for electoral violence and the failure to implement comprehensive electoral and security sector reforms continue to fuel the cycle of conflict (Orji and Uzodi, 2013; Human Rights Watch 2012).

Elections in Nigeria have increasingly become a major national security concern due to persistent violence, voter intimidation, ballot box snatching, and manipulation by political elites. These electoral malpractices undermine democratic legitimacy, fuel ethnic and religious tensions, and erode public trust in state institutions. Consequently, elections, instead of promoting peaceful political transitions, often trigger instability, destruction of lives and

property, and deepen insecurity across various regions of the country. The surge in electoral irregularities and violence, which peaked during recent elections and resulted in the loss of lives and property, has not only undermined the credibility of democratic governance but also threatened Nigeria's corporate existence. The consequences of such violence on the electoral process and by extension, national security are profound, as citizens become alienated from their leaders, disillusioned with government policies, and increasingly apathetic toward elections. The recurring and devastating effects of these issues on inclusive governance, public safety, and state stability highlight the critical importance of this study. Elections in Nigeria present significant national security challenges, characterized by widespread violence, voter intimidation, ballot box snatching, elite manipulation, and institutional weaknesses. These problems intensify insecurity, deepen ethnic and religious divisions, and erode democratic principles. Despite multiple democratic transitions since 1999, electoral processes continue to suffer from thuggery, vote buying, and public distrust, transforming what should be a peaceful means of leadership selection into a source of conflict, instability, and loss of lives across the country. It is the reoccurring and catastrophic impacts of these phenomena on inclusive governance, physical safety of the citizenry and the state that underscores the imperative of this study. Thus, the nexus between elections and national security in Nigeria presents a complex and urgent challenge.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine the impact of election and national security in Nigeria in the 2019 and 2023. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. to examine the impact of electoral credibility on national security in the 2019 and 2023
2. to evaluate the impact of voters education on national security in the 2019 and 2023
3. to examine the effect of electoral violence on national security in the 2019 and 2023

4. to determine the effects of electoral malpractices on national security in the 2019 and 2023

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the impact of electoral credibility on national security in the 2019 and 2023?
2. What are the impacts of voters' education on national security in the 2019 and 2023?
3. What are the effects of electoral violence on national security in the 2019 and 2023?
4. What are the effects of electoral malpractices on national security in the 2019 and 2023?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

Ho¹ there is no relationship between electoral credibility and national security in the 2019 and 2023

Hr¹ there is a relationship between electoral credibility and national security in the 2019 and 2023

Ho² there is no relationship between voters' education and national security in the 2019 and 2023

Hr² there is a relationship between voters' education and national security in the 2019 and 2023

Ho³ there is no relationship between electoral violence and national security in the 2019 and 2023

Hr³ there is a relationship between electoral violence and national security in the 2019 and 2023

Ho⁴ there is no relationship between electoral malpractices and national security in the 2019 and 2023

Hr⁴ there is a relationship between electoral malpractices and national security in the 2019 and 2023

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of studying the relationship between elections and national security in Nigeria lies in its implications for democratic consolidation, political stability, and societal development. Nigeria, as Africa's most populous country and largest democracy, has experienced repeated cycles of electoral violence, insecurity, and institutional distrust. Understanding how elections impact national security—and vice versa—can provide valuable insights for policy-making, governance, and conflict prevention.

First, this study is crucial for strengthening democratic institutions. By identifying the factors that trigger violence and insecurity during elections, the study can inform reforms in electoral management, security deployment, and voter protection. It highlights the need for transparent and credible electoral processes that foster trust among citizens and reduce political desperation and violence.

Second, the study contributes to national security policy. In recent elections, insurgency, banditry, and secessionist threats have disrupted voting in parts of Nigeria, leading to voter suppression and delegitimization of election outcomes. A clear understanding of how insecurity affects electoral processes will guide security agencies in designing more effective, non-partisan strategies for election security.

Third, this study has academic and scholarly value. It adds to the growing literature on the intersection of democracy and security in developing nations. It also provides a framework for future research on electoral violence, state fragility, and democratic resilience in Nigeria and similar contexts.

Lastly, the findings of this study will support civil society organizations and electoral observers in advocating for peaceful elections, civic engagement, and the protection of democratic values. By addressing the root causes of insecurity and electoral manipulation, this research promotes long-term peace, national integration, and sustainable governance in Nigeria. In sum, the study offers practical, academic, and policy-relevant insights necessary for safeguarding both democracy and national security in the Nigerian context.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study will cover two general elections of 2019 and 2023. The study will be conducted in Edo State. The three senatorial districts will be covered as one local government will be selected from each senatorial district to reflect the view of the people.

1.8 Area of the Study

Edo State, located in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria, is one of the nation's most historically significant states. Created in 1991 after the split of the former Bendel State, Edo has its capital in Benin City, which is renowned for its rich cultural heritage, particularly the ancient Benin Kingdom. The state is bordered by Kogi to the northeast, Delta to the southeast, Ondo to the west, and Anambra to the east. Edo State is home to diverse ethnic groups, with the Edo (Bini) being predominant, alongside Esan, Owan, Afemai, and others. The people are widely known for their deep-rooted traditions, art, bronze works, and festivals, which continue to attract both local and international recognition. Agriculture is a major economic activity, with crops such as cassava, yam, rubber, oil palm, and maize cultivated in abundance.

Politically, Edo State has been significant in Nigeria's democratic journey, often serving as a battleground for major political parties. Its strategic location and resource base make it a key player in national development. Despite challenges such as unemployment, infrastructural

deficits, and insecurity, Edo State remains an important hub for culture, politics, education, and economic growth in Nigeria.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Election

An election is a formal process through which citizens choose individuals to represent them in public offices or make decisions on key national issues. It is a core element of democracy, allowing people to express their political preferences peacefully and regularly. Elections can be held at various levels—local, regional, or national—and typically involve political parties, candidates, electoral commissions, and voters. A credible election is characterized by fairness, transparency, and inclusiveness.

Electoral Malpractice

Electoral malpractice refers to illegal or unethical actions that undermine the integrity, fairness, and credibility of the electoral process. These practices include vote buying, ballot box snatching, rigging of results, voter intimidation, underage voting, and manipulation of electoral rolls.

Electoral Credibility

Electoral credibility refers to the degree to which an election is perceived as free, fair, transparent, and reflective of the true will of the people. It involves impartial electoral processes, accurate voter registration, equal opportunity for all candidates, and honest vote counting. Electoral credibility is essential for democratic legitimacy and political stability.

Security

Security refers to the protection of individuals, communities, and the state from threats that could harm life, property, or national stability. It includes physical safety, protection from violence,

crime prevention, and the preservation of law and order. Globally, security is critical for national development, peaceful coexistence, and democratic governance.

National security

National security refers to a nation's ability to protect its citizens, territory, and institutions from internal and external threats. It encompasses military defense, law enforcement, intelligence, and crisis management. In any nation, national security is vital for peace, political stability, economic growth, and the protection of democratic values and sovereignty.

INEC

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is the electoral body responsible for organizing, supervising, and conducting elections in Nigeria. Established by the 1999 Constitution, INEC plays a crucial role in ensuring credible, free, and fair elections. Its responsibilities include voter registration, political party monitoring, election timetable planning, and result collation. INEC is expected to operate independently and impartially to maintain public trust in the electoral process.

Organization of the Study

The research study is structured or organized into five chapters. Chapter one presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, the objective of the study, research questions, hypotheses, the significance of the study, scope of the study and definition of terms. Chapter two which is the next chapter will present a review of extant literature and the theoretical framework with respect to the study. The issues to be considered in this section will boarder on elections and its effect on national security in Nigeria. In chapter three of this study, the research methodology or technique adopted will be presented. It ranges from the research design, population of study, sample size, method of data collection to analysis. Chapter four will present the analysis of data

and discussion of findings from the study's field survey that focused on the effects of election on Nigeria's national security. Finally, chapter five will presents a holistic summary of the research study, its conclusion and based on the findings in the study offers its recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Conceptualization of Election

Election is a foundational element of democratic governance, serving as the primary mechanism through which citizens express their political will and participate in the selection of their leaders and representatives (Mamabolo, 2024). Conceptually, an election is a formal decision-making process in which a population chooses individuals to hold public office, based on the principles of representation, legitimacy, and accountability (Ojukwu, Mbah & Maduekwe, 2019). At its core, the concept of an election is rooted in the idea of popular sovereignty, the belief that power ultimately resides with the people. Through elections, citizens delegate authority to those who will govern on their behalf. Elections also serve as a mechanism for political competition, providing a peaceful means for the transfer of power and for holding leaders accountable for their performance in office.

Election is an organized group decision-making process by which the citizens of a country choose an individual to hold public office. Elections have proven to be a useful mechanism by which representative democracy operates since the 17th century (Ejikeme, 2019). Heywood (1997 as cited in Ojo & Ademowo, 2015) avers that election is one of the most prominent features of political events in a modern democracy. Although not necessarily sufficient for political representation, elections remain germane to the entrenchment of democratic principles and practices. It is given its non-negligible relevance in democratic practice that election has been labelled as the very heart of democracy. For Robert (2011), elections may be used to fill offices in the executive, legislature, and sometimes, the judiciary, and for regional and local government.

This process is also used in many other private and business organizations, from clubs to voluntary associations and corporations. Therefore, an election can be aptly defined as an indispensable element of democracy that affords the governed an opportunity to choose those that will govern them through a laid down procedure of collective decision making. An election is a pillar upon which democracy and its eventual consolidation are rooted.

Election could be perceived as institutionalized procedure for choosing office-holders by eligible voters in the state. Election according to Ushie (2005) is a procedure, recognized by the rules of a state or an organization, whereby all or some of the members of the state or organization choose a smaller number of persons or a person to hold office of authority in the state or organization. It is an official or formal procedure through which public officers are filled or specific policy measures are decided. Elections usually take place when two or more candidates are vying for one position either in the public or private sector. Election, despite its role as a medium for the emergence of leaders, equally serves ceremonial functions. Citizens of a State usually have sense of participation in their political process, when they are given the chance to express their will through voting for their preferred candidates. In the same vein, governments that emerged through free and fair elections, equally enjoys legitimacy and stability emanating from the fact that its power is derived from the people (Siachiwena & Saunders, 2021). It is largely a process and procedure of transforming votes into representation in modern democracies.

The conceptual framework of elections includes several key components: electoral laws and systems, political parties, voter participation, electoral integrity, and freedom of choice. These elements collectively ensure that elections are free, fair, and credible. The type of electoral system used—whether proportional representation, first-past-the-post, or mixed systems also

significantly shapes the outcomes and nature of political representation. Elections are more than periodic events; they are institutions that reflect the political culture, history, and legal framework of a society. In mature democracies, elections function as instruments of accountability and legitimacy, while in emerging democracies, they often symbolize a commitment to democratic values, even if challenges such as vote buying, electoral violence, and disenfranchisement persist.

A free and fair election encompasses their procedural, institutional, and normative dimensions. As a democratic practice, elections are vital not only for the selection of leaders but also for the reinforcement of civic responsibility, the protection of civil liberties, and the overall stability and legitimacy of the political system. Democratic government is government by “consent of the governed”, election gives practical meaning to this notion of “consent”. According to Schumpeter (1942) election is the very heart of democracy. He goes on to state that it is an “institutional arrangement”, as a means of filling public offices by a competitive struggle for the people's vote. According to Olisa et. al. (1991) Elections are the mechanisms for selecting people into public offices or other private positions. In the views of Gauba (2007) election is the process by which the members of a community or organization choose one or more persons to exercise authority on their behalf. The provision of election in democracy is intended to ensure that the government will exercise its powers with the consent of the governed. In other words, election lends legitimacy to the authority of the government. Election is therefore a process through which members of a group, club, societies, communities and organizations choose some of their members to hold offices at regular intervals.

2.2 Functions of Election

According to Harpop and Miller (1987), there are two opposing theories about the purposes of competitive elections. According to the popular view, elections serve as a vehicle for holding elected officials accountable and compelling them to enact laws that in some way represent the will of the people. On the other side, this highlights how elections work from the bottom up. According to Ginsberg (1982), elections serve as a tool for the government and political elites to exert influence over the populace, making them more submissive, docile, and eventually subject to governance. The top-bottom functions are highlighted in this view. In actuality, elections are multifaceted; they are neither merely a way to guarantee political control nor a way to hold the public accountable. Elections are "two-way streets", like all political communication channels, giving the elites and the general populace, as well as the government, the chance to influence one another. The following are some of the primary purposes of elections:

1. Recruitment of Politicians for electioneering process: Elections are the main source of political recruiting in democratic nations like Nigeria, India, and the United States of America, taking into consideration the procedure by which parties nominate candidates (Zainawa, 2023). As a result, politicians typically possess qualities and abilities connected to electioneering, such as charisma, persuasive abilities, and attractiveness, rather than those that are appropriate for performing constituent obligations, serving on committees, managing government agencies, and so forth.
2. Making government: In jurisdictions where the political executive is directly chosen, elections form governments. Elections have a significant impact on government formation in the more prevalent parliamentary systems when they tend to provide one party a certain legislative majority (Saxer, 2025). The implementation of proportional representation results in post-

election agreements and the creation and dissolution of governments without the need for elections.

3. It provides representation for the people: Elections that are free, fair, and competitive serve as a forum for the public to voice their desires to the government. Elections are a fundamental mechanism through which democratic societies ensure representation of the people in governance (Gu, 2024). By participating in elections, citizens exercise their right to choose leaders who reflect their interests, values, and aspirations. This process enables the electorate to have a voice in decision-making, as elected officials are expected to act on behalf of those who voted them into office. Representation through elections ensures that diverse segments of the population — including ethnic, religious, and socio-economic groups — can influence public policy and national priorities. In multi-party systems, different political parties present varying policy platforms, offering voters options that best align with their preferences (Yagboyaju & Akinola, 2019). This pluralism enhances inclusivity and accountability, fostering a sense of ownership among citizens over their government.

4. Policy Influencing: Elections undoubtedly discourage governments from pursuing extreme and highly unpopular initiatives, but they can only be said to have a direct impact on policy in rare instances where a single subject dominates the campaign (Rosenje, Nkwede, Peju-Rosenje & Adeniyi, 2022). Another argument is that the range of policy alternatives presented in elections is usually so limited that the outcome may only have a little impact on policy.

5. Educating Voters: Election campaigning gives voters a wealth of information on parties, candidates, policies, the political system, the track record of the present administration, etc (Falguera, 2014). But only if the material and delivery style pique public attention and spark discussion rather than apathy and alienation will this result in education. The fact that political

parties and politicians aim to convince rather than educate also gives them a strong incentive to spread false and incomplete information.

6. Election Builds Legitimacy: Elections, even if they are not competitive, are held by authoritarian regimes for a number of reasons, including the fact that they give legitimacy to their form of governance (Gu, 2024). This occurs as a result of campaign rituals that in some way revolve around elections.

7. It strengthens the elites: Elites use elections as a means of controlling and influencing the general populace. Elections that steer political discontent and dissent in a constitutional direction might neutralise them and permit governments to change while the system remains in power. Elections are especially successful in this regard since they simultaneously offer voters the sense that they have control over the government (Agu, 2015).

2.3 The Historical Antecedent of Elections and Political Parties in Nigeria

One essential element of any democratic state is elections. They give people the chance to exercise their political rights by selecting representatives to act on their behalf. The two primary eras of Nigeria's electoral system's growth are colonial (1900–1959) and post-colonial (1960–present). The First Republic (1960–1966), Second Republic (1979–1983), Third Republic (1993–1999), and Fourth Republic (1999–date) are further divisions of the post-colonial era (Ikelegbe, 2015).

During the colonial era, the Lagos Town Council was elected on March 29, 1920, and the Clifford Constitution of 1922 was used to hold the first general elections on September 20, 1923. Nigeria's first political party, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), was founded as a result of the Constitution, which also granted the country its first electoral rights. Following Nigeria's adoption of the elective principle, with four elected seats—three for Lagos and one for

Calabar—Africans were elected to the legislative council. Throughout colonial Nigeria, elections for the legislative council were held on a regular basis until the final elections in 1959. A significant turning point in Nigeria's liberation from colonial rule was the general elections of 1959 (Iyayi, 2005).

Nigeria became an independent nation on October 1, 1960, and in 1963 it became a republic. The first president of the nation was Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, who had previously served as the governor general. Nigeria's first post-independence elections were the legislative elections in 1964–1965. With 162 of the 312 seats in the House of Representatives, the Northern People's Congress emerged victorious. Nigeria's prime minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, who had held the office since the country's independence, was also re-elected (Ikelegbe, 2015).

But the First Republic ended prematurely in January 1966 when Major Nzeogwu conducted a military coup. Major General Aguisi Ironsi, General Yakubu Gowon, General Murtala Mohammed, and Major General Olusegun Obasanjo were Heads of State at various points of time as a result of this coup and subsequent coups (IRIAD, 2021).

Under the Obasanjo government, Nigeria reverted to democracy in 1979 after thirteen years of military dictatorship. As planned, the first elections under the 1979 Constitution took place in July and August of that year. Nigerian women now have the ability to vote thanks to this Constitution, which also lowered the voting age from 21 to 18. The military government relinquished power to a new civilian government led by President Shehu Shagari on October 1, 1979, after elections brought about a democratically elected government (Okeke, 2025).

In a subsequent election in 1983, incumbent Shehu Shagari was elected to a second term. However, a military coup headed by Major General Muhammadu Buhari in 1983 resulted in the

return of military control in Nigeria, ending the Second Republic once more. General Ibrahim Babangida would go on to become Head of State in 1985 (Historyville, 2022).

A return to democracy was attempted by the Babangida government. After the drafting of the 1989 Constitution, 1992 legislative elections and June 12, 1993 presidential elections were held. Although the National Electoral Commission (NEC) at the time declined to declare election results despite many court judgments, the unofficial election results indicated that Chief Moshood Abiola of the Social Democratic Party won. A number of strikes and protests broke out in the South-West when the elections were cancelled (Falode, 2018). After General Babangida resigned, Chief Ernest Shonekan became the head of the Interim National Government. However, the Third Republic was quickly ended in November 1993 by another military coup headed by General Sani Abacha, meaning that Shonekan was only in government for roughly three months (Historyville, 2022). The definitive return to democracy in Nigeria was brought about by General Abdulsalami Abubakar, who took over as Head of State after Abacha's death in 1998.

After military rule ended in 1999, Nigeria's democracy reached a significant turning point with the Fourth Republic election, which ushered in more than 20 years of civilian governance. The then incumbent president, Olusegun Obasanjo, won the presidential election that was conducted on April 19, 2003, four years later. The country had its third general election in 2007. Reports state that several people were killed in the 2007 elections. President Yar'adua, the winner of the election, acknowledged that there were anomalies in the process. As a result, the Electoral Reform Committee (ERC), headed by Justice Uwais, was established to make suggestions for enhancing the nation's electoral system (Aiyede, 2012).

Although the 2011 election was said to be more credible and transparent than the previous elections held in 2007, it was not without its flaws, including vote rigging, ballot stuffing, and ballot box snatching. The declaration of the incumbent as the winner of the 2011 presidential elections led to violent protests and riots, particularly in the northern parts of Nigeria, which were ardent supporters of the opposition candidate Muhammadu Buhari. The 2010 Electoral Act was passed in response to the ERC's recommendation to amend the 2006 Electoral Act in order to ensure transparency in the process and increase public confidence in INEC (Jega, 2013).

The 2015 elections were the most competitive in the nation's electoral history. Nonetheless, the 2015 election was likely the most credible in Nigerian election history, despite the Boko Haram sect's threats of violence and the difficult political climate leading up to the election (Yoroms, 2016). The incumbent was defeated by an opposition candidate in the presidential election for the first time.

On February 16, 2019, Nigeria was to hold general elections once more. The 2019 elections were expected to be better than the 2015 due to the results of the previous elections and the notable improvements made to the voting process. However, based on reports from election observers and popular opinion, the 2019 general elections did not live up to expectations because Nigerians were unhappy with both the overall election result and INEC's handling of the elections. The election was tainted by poor voter turnout, electoral malfeasance, violence, security personnel's claimed party affiliations, and the opposition party's rejection of the results (Obi, Asogwa & Ibenekwu, 2023).

From the foregoing, we have discussed the development of the electoral process of Nigeria. Nigerian elections have been characterised by violence and electoral malpractices, despite the numerous electoral commissions' tremendous attempts to reform the process (Ukpong & Udoh,

2023). This highlights the urgent need for constitutional and electoral change in order to overcome the various problems that plague Nigerian elections.

Table 2: The History of elections in Nigeria from Colonial to Post Colonial Era

| Year of election | Type of election | Enabling laws governing the election |
|--|---|--|
| Elections During the Colonial Era | | |
| 1920 | Lagos Town Council | The 1919 Township Ordinance |
| 1923 | Legislative Council | Clifford Constitution, 1922 (Legislative Council) Order-in-Council, 1922 |
| 1928 | Legislative Council | Clifford Constitution, 1922 (Legislative Council) Order-in-Council, 1922 |
| 1933 | Legislative Council | Clifford Constitution, 1922 (Legislative Council) Order-in-Council, 1922 |
| 1938 | Legislative Council | Clifford Constitution, 1922 (Legislative Council) Order-in-Council, 1922 |
| 1940 and 1941 | Bye-elections into the Legislative Council | Clifford Constitution, 1922 (Legislative Council) Order-in-Council, 1922 |
| 1943 | Elections into two seats of the Legislative Council | Clifford Constitution, 1922 (Legislative Council) Order-in-Council, 1922 |
| 1947 | Legislative Council | Arthur Richards Constitution, 1946 |
| 1951 | Western Region House of Assembly | Macpherson Constitution of 1951. The Election Regulations of 1951 |
| 1954 | House of Representative & | Oliver Lyttleton Constitution, 1954. |

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| | Regional House of Assembly | The Election Regulations of 1951 |
| 1959 | Parliamentary elections | Order-in-Council, 1958 (Electoral Provisions) Order in Council, 1958. The Elections (House of Representatives) Regulations of 1958. |
| Elections During the Post-Colonial Era | | |
| 1964/1965 | Parliamentary elections | Republican Constitution, 1960 Electoral (Amendment) Act, 1964 |
| 1979 | Presidential/Parliamentary elections | 1979 Constitution The Electoral Act 1977 |
| 1983 | Presidential/Parliamentary elections | The 1979 Constitution The Electoral Act 1982 |
| 1992 | Parliamentary elections | 1989 Constitution National Assembly (Basic Constitutional and Transitional Provisions) Decree 1992. No. 18 |
| 1993 | Presidential elections | 1989 Constitution Presidential Election (Basic Constitutional and Transitional) Decree No.13 of 1993 |
| 1997 | Local government Council elections | Local Government (Basic Constitutional and Transitional Provisions) Decree No. |

| | | |
|------|-----------------------------|--|
| | | 7 of 1997 |
| 1998 | National Assembly Elections | Transition to Civil Rule (Political Programme) Decree No. 1 of 1996 National Electoral Commission of Nigeria Decree No. 3 of 1996 |
| 1999 | General elections | 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Transition to Civil Rule Decree (Political Programme) of 1998 Presidential Election (Basic Constitutional and Transitional Provisions) Decree 1999 Political Parties Decree (Registration and Activities) of 1998. State Government (Basic Constitutional and Transitional Provisions) (Amendment) Decree 1999. Independent National Electoral Commission Amendment Decree, Decree No. 17 of 1998 National Assembly (Basic Constitutional and Transitional Provisions) Decree |

| | | |
|------|-------------------|--|
| | | 1999 |
| 2003 | General elections | 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Electoral Act 2002 |
| 2007 | General elections | 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Electoral Act, 2006 |
| 2011 | General Elections | 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended by the First to Third Alteration Acts, 2010) Electoral Act, 2010 |
| 2015 | General Elections | 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended by First to Third Alteration Acts, 2010) Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended). INEC Regulations and Guidelines, 2015 |
| 2019 | General Elections | 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended by the First to Third Alteration Acts, 2010 and the Fourth Alteration Act, 2017) Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended) INEC Regulations and Guidelines for |

| | | |
|------|-------------------|---|
| | | the Conduct of Elections, 2019 |
| 2023 | General Elections | 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended by the First to Third Alteration Acts, 2010 and the Fourth Alteration Act, 2017) Electoral Act, 2022 (as amended) INEC Regulations and Guidelines for the Conduct of Elections, 2023 |

Source: Electoral Hub, (2021)

2.4 National Security

National security was defined as the ability of a sovereign state to cater for the protection and defence of its citizenry (Osisanya, 2021). In today’s complex and interdependent world, however, there are many nontraditional threats like pandemics, climate change, refugee crises, human trafficking, and a gamut of such others. Therefore, the national security concept must be perceived from a more holistic approach. Such an all-encompassing view of national security demands that the determinant of security is not just the coercive elements of state power but its comprehensive national power, with the latter being a fusion of many factors across all facets of national life (Chandra & Bhonsle, 2015).

Security is a relative state of safety when one can successfully combat obvious risks to the existence of someone or something. Governmentally, security is accomplished by implementing guidelines and safeguards for specific groups of information, systems, buildings, communications, people, machinery, or activities.

"Security" is basically defined as the absence of risk or threat to human life or property. Security is a setting where people can flourish and freely enjoy their rights; it goes beyond the lack of a physical threat or an armed conflict. It necessitates economic growth, democracy, human rights, and access to healthcare and education. In this state, official institutions uphold citizens' rights and treat them equitably (Bastick et al., 2013). Various scholars and institutions have varied definitions of security. Although most people concentrate on their personal and family security on a daily basis, governments pay attention to the elements that make a state secure, such as strong borders, a strong military, a thriving economy, and internal security.

Globally, to create an environment that is favourable to conducting a democratic poll, security is a vital component of the electoral process and a critical prerequisite in the context of elections. It is the hallmark of democracy and the key component of a workable and widely accepted voting system. The electoral process is the foundation of democracy since free, fair, and open elections are the hallmark of a democratic nation. The idea of a regular election that counts the votes of the populace and permits a peaceful transfer of power is, in fact, the most essential component of a liberal international order and democratic norm (Rosenzweig, 2018).

There is no commonly accepted definition of national security, however it has been defined as the government's concern for a state's stability and security. It includes all of the actions taken by a country to protect its sovereignty. According to Okoroafor et al. (2012), national security "is the physical protection of a nation's subjects, landscape, sovereignty, food security and national image". Thus, national security encompasses more than just military-strategic capabilities or physical defence; it also includes environmental, food, and human security. Ogunbanyo in Nwolise (2008:349) stressed further that "security is more than military security or security from external attacks. For many inhabitants in developing countries, security is concerned with the

basic level of struggle for survival. Therefore, in order to provide an integrated security assessment, the non-military dimensions of security should be added”.

According to Osisanya (2018), national security is “the ability of a state to cater for the protection and defence of its citizenry”. Instead of implying the absence of risk, national security can be viewed as a shared right that includes the freedom to live in dignity and the freedom from fear and want (Ammerdown Group, 2016). Also, Gwarzo (1998 as cited in Adebambo et al., 2016), national security refers to “freedom from hunger, or from threat to a nation’s ability to protect and defend itself, promote its esteemed interest and values, and enhance the well-being of its people”. According to Yusuf (2015), national security is the state in which our most cherished values, democratic way of life, governmental institutions, and the unity, prosperity, and well-being of our people and nation are all consistently enhanced and protected. Thus, it can be characterised as a state's capacity to protect and defend its people in a political, economic, and social sense, free from threats from within or without.

According to Nnoli (2006), national security is a valued concept that is linked to the physical safety of people, communities, or nation-states, together with the safety of their other most valued principles. It suggests that there are no dangers, worries, or threats. Beyond the protection of the nation-state, the defence of territorial integrity and sovereignty by military institutions and capabilities, and the upholding of the citizens' deeply held values, national security encompasses more. Thus, national security encompasses not only the state's and its residents' physical survival but also broad entitlements like access to basic necessities and social services like food, education, health, housing, and work, the lack of which is one of the main causes of insecurity in the state. Both the cause and the result of development and good governance—which include

aspects of distributive fairness, fair play, and human rights only to the extent that they promote physical safety are intimately tied to national security (Nnoli 2006).

A paradigm shift in the way national security is conceptualised means that it now includes the right to a sustainable environment and the preservation of cultural and religious identity, both of which have major effects on the survival of nation-states and the physical safety of their citizens. Thus, national security is a comprehensive strategy for maintaining a nation-state's entirety. The protection of the ethnic and other social groups, the citizens and their means of subsistence, the rulers and their governments, the state's institutions, its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the environment and ecosystem from dangers and attacks from the within or the outside. Nnoli (2006) asserts that the ability to offer social, economic, and political conditions that promote happiness and relative prosperity for the populace is a component of national security. As noted by Al-Mashal (2003:14), national security deals with “the physical, social and psychological quality of life of a society and its members both in domestic setting and within the larger regional and global system”

Madubuegwu, Obiorah & Nwagbo (2022) conceptualized national security as the totality of actions and frameworks towards protecting a state from all factors that may constitute impediments to its growth and survival. Given the definition of national security and its ramifications, it is critical to emphasise that security is an issue that affects a country's posture, stability, well-being, and progress. In areas like property, freedom and well-being, and other vital infrastructures, it becomes a criterion for expressing a country's standing in the community of nations.

Richard (2020) in his view defined national security as the necessity of preserving the country's security. Government-imposed safeguards against political, economic, energy, food,

environmental, health, communication, transportation, and territorial integrity loss are included. A nation must invest in a variety of areas and deal with the threats that are currently erupting, including economic issues, youth unemployment, disease outbreaks, extremism, terrorism, insurgency, environmental degradation, energy scarcity, drug cartels, child trafficking, cybercrime, corruption, trade imbalances, and outright hostility from foreign governments, in order to achieve national security.

Practically every aspect of human life is impacted by national security. The most effective way to handle it is by considering its overlapping impacts, which include problems with environmental degradation and food security. In addition, it covers psychological security, arms security, and health issues. Ken (2019) viewed national security in terms of sustainable development rather than the more restricting it to environment degradation and scarcity. This is because, despite the dangers that a nation may face, national security can also be seen as a multifaceted process whose goal is to protect national values like survival, self-preservation, and self-perpetuation. In contrast to the oversimplified interpretation of environmental shortage and violent conflict, he reintegrates the various social, economic (including food security), and political aspects that shape environmental circumstances and environmental governance. It is appropriate to expand the definition of national security to include far more than the conventional state-centered and essentially military issues that are frequently connected to it.

Buzan (1990) established five pillars of the new national security concept: environmental, social, political, economic, and military. The two-level interaction between the state's armed offensive and defensive capacities is covered by military security, he claimed, whereas political security encompasses the state's organisational stability, its system of governance, and the ideologies that support it. Economic security necessitates having access to the capital, markets, and resources

required to maintain acceptable levels of governmental power and welfare. National identity and customs, language, cultural, and religious patterns, as well as acceptable conditions, are all provided by societal security. The preservation of the local and global biosphere is necessary for environmental security since it is the vital support system that all other human endeavours rely on. But according to Nwolise (2009), Buzan's five elements of security are too restricted and Eurocentric to adequately describe the idea of national security in a rapacious political culture like Nigeria. He went on to develop 10 additional dimensions, which include “physical, psychological, legal, people’s power, treasury, technological, image, territorial, global and spiritual security”.

The overall goal of national security is to ensure the complete safety and security of all the entities that comprise a nation state, like Nigeria. The autonomy and sovereignty of a nation state are sustained by the security of these organisations. It captures the residents' faith in a country's government's capacity to maintain, defend, secure, and enshrine the country (Nigeria) in safety from any form of aggression, whether it comes from within or without.

The concept of national security will be discussed in two phases – state-centric and human security.

2.5 The State-Centricism of National Security

The state-centric nature and dimensions of national security emphasize the central role of the state as the primary actor responsible for safeguarding the survival, stability, and sovereignty of its territory and citizens. Traditionally rooted in realist political thought, national security has been defined in terms of protecting the state from external aggression, military threats, and territorial encroachment (Ugwu, Ohabuenyi & Nnamani, 2023). In this framework, the state is

both the referent object and the guarantor of security, with national power especially military capability serving as the main instrument for ensuring safety and defense.

The state-centric nature of national security is based on the assumption that the state possesses the monopoly of legitimate violence and thus bears the ultimate responsibility for protecting its borders, citizens, and political institutions (Hama, 2017). This traditional view emerged prominently during the Cold War when the focus of security was largely on military strength, nuclear deterrence, and geopolitical rivalries. Consequently, national security policies revolved around defense alliances, intelligence operations, and military preparedness to counter perceived external threats.

However, the dimensions of national security have evolved beyond the purely military sphere to include political, economic, social, environmental, and cyber domains. The political dimension involves the protection of governance structures and political stability, while the economic dimension addresses threats to national prosperity, such as resource scarcity or financial crises (Duyile & Aigbe, 2025). Social and environmental dimensions focus on internal cohesion, public safety, and resilience to natural or man-made disasters. Furthermore, the rise of globalization and technological advancement has introduced new challenges such as terrorism, cyber warfare, and transnational crime, which transcend borders but still require coordinated state responses (Shaukat, Zeb, Arbab & Yousuf, 2024).

In essence, while the concept of national security has broadened to encompass human and non-traditional concerns, its foundation remains state-centric, emphasizing the state's enduring role as the principal protector and actor in securing national interests and survival.

2.6 Human Security and National Security

According to Duyile and Aigbe (2025), security is a comprehensive and multifaceted concept that epitomises a state where one's survival is not believed to be at risk. It encompasses several facets of national and international interests and objectives. It is in this context that the UNDP (1994) conceptualized the term security from a humanistic point of view. As noted in the United Nations General Assembly resolution 66/290, human security is an approach to assist member states in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood, and dignity of their people. It is a proven analytical and planning framework that supports more comprehensive and preventive responses by the United Nations, cutting across sectors, developing contextually relevant solutions, and adopting partnerships to help realise a world free from fear, want, and indignity (United Nations, 2017). The term calls for people-centered, comprehensive, context-specific, and prevention-oriented responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all people. To this extent, the approach provides for a framework that presents a comprehensive element that comprises human security. According to the human security handbook (2016), human security is divided into: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. Holistically, the aim of human security is to tackle the root causes of a phenomenon, which are categorised under the seven human security components (United Nations, 2017).

The human security nature and dimensions of national security represent a paradigm shift from the traditional state-centric approach, focusing on the protection and empowerment of individuals rather than merely safeguarding the state. Emerging prominently after the Cold War, especially through the 1994 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human

Development Report, human security emphasizes that the security of nations is inseparable from the security of their people. It broadens the concept of security to include freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom to live in dignity.

The nature of human security is people-centered, multidimensional, and preventive. It recognizes that individuals face multiple threats—economic deprivation, hunger, disease, environmental degradation, political repression, and social injustice that can undermine peace and stability as much as armed conflict (Sabela et al., 2025). By prioritizing human well-being, equality, and access to basic needs, human security views development, human rights, and peace as interdependent. It thus shifts the focus from military defense to the protection and empowerment of individuals within and beyond state boundaries.

The dimensions of human security, as identified by the UNDP, include economic security (ensuring stable livelihoods and protection from poverty), food security (access to sufficient and nutritious food), health security (protection from diseases and access to healthcare), environmental security (safeguarding against pollution and ecological degradation), personal security (protection from physical violence, crime, and abuse), community security (preservation of cultural identity and social cohesion), and political security (guaranteeing human rights, justice, and participation in governance) (Duyile and Aigbe, 2025).

Human security approach broadens national security to include the protection of individuals from both violent and non-violent threats. It underscores that the safety and prosperity of the state ultimately depend on the security and dignity of its citizens. Hence, sustainable peace and development can only be achieved when human security becomes central to national and global policy frameworks.

2.7 The Nexus between Election and National Security in Nigeria

The mechanism by which political leaders came to power has been the main obstacle to Nigeria's developmental objectives from the country's first republic. Unquestionably, the fierce competitions and corruption that had preceded Nigerian elections since 1959 had endangered the country's corporate existence, produced unpopular and unaccountable leaders, and alienated and created widespread apathy towards the country's electoral process and governance in general (Okorie, Michael & Eze, 2020).

Elections and national security are intrinsically linked in Nigeria, where democratic processes have frequently been marred by violence, political instability, and insecurity (Ezonbi & Jonah, 2018). The nexus is cyclical—elections influence national security, and the state of security affects the credibility, participation, and outcome of elections (Odey, 2018). Nigeria's socio-political landscape, marked by ethnic diversity, religious divides, and weak institutions, has made this relationship particularly volatile.

Elections in Nigeria are often perceived not just as mechanisms of democratic choice but as high-stakes contests for access to power, wealth, and state resources. This perception breeds desperation among political actors, who often deploy violence, intimidation, and thuggery to gain advantage (Okoli, Nebeife & Izang, 2021). During electoral periods, there is usually a surge in politically motivated violence, including attacks on political opponents, destruction of electoral materials, and harassment of voters. These activities heighten insecurity and triggers wider unrest in some states in the country.

Conversely, the prevailing security situation in Nigeria significantly impacts the conduct and outcome of elections (Oni, Faluyi, Asumu & Olutola, 2025). Widespread insecurity caused by insurgency in the Northeast, banditry in the Northwest, and separatist violence in the Southeast

has led to the displacement of millions of voters and the disruption of electoral processes. The presence of armed non-state actors often prevents the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) from deploying personnel and materials to polling units, especially in rural and conflict-prone areas. This creates voter disenfranchisement and undermines the legitimacy of election results. In addition, when voters feel unsafe, they are less likely to participate in elections, leading to low voter turnout and questions about the representativeness of elected leaders (González, Mackenna, Scherman & Joignant, 2024).

The deployment of security agencies during elections is another crucial dimension of this relationship. While the police and military are meant to safeguard the process, they are often accused of partisanship, harassment of opposition supporters, and aiding vote suppression. This perceived lack of neutrality erodes public trust in both the electoral system and the security institutions. In extreme cases, security forces have been accused of enabling electoral fraud and violence rather than preventing them (Adenyi, Onyia & Nnamchi, 2019).

The lack of electoral integrity also has long-term implications for national security. When elections are rigged or perceived as unfair, citizens lose confidence in democratic institutions, potentially resorting to protests, rebellion, or armed struggle. Groups like Boko Haram and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) have, at various times, cited electoral injustice and political marginalization as part of their grievances, further highlighting the connection between flawed elections and the rise of insurgency and secessionist sentiments (Nwokike, Ukorah, Nwosu & Udegbunam, 2023).

Summarily, the relationship between elections and national security in Nigeria is mutually reinforcing. Credible, transparent, and peaceful elections are essential to maintaining national cohesion and stability, while ensuring security is critical for conducting free and fair elections.

To end Nigeria's cycle of political instability and insecurity, it is imperative to address election violence, bolster democratic institutions, and restructure security services.

2.8 The Effects of Electoral Violence on National Security in Nigeria

There abounds various impact of political violence on Nigerian Security and they include;

The loss of lives and properties: Electoral violence in Nigeria has led to significant loss of lives and destruction of property, posing a serious threat to national security. During election periods, violent clashes often erupt between rival political supporters, thugs, and security forces. These confrontations have resulted in numerous casualties, with civilians, politicians, and security personnel among the victim (Rosenje, Nkwede, Peju-Rosenje, Adeniyi, 2022) . In some cases, entire communities have been terrorized by politically motivated attacks, leading to displacement and long-term trauma. The destruction of property, including campaign offices, homes, markets, and public infrastructure, disrupts local economies and deepens poverty. Such violence creates an atmosphere of fear and instability, discouraging voter turnout and undermining the legitimacy of the electoral process. The presence of armed groups and political thugs also weakens the authority of the state, as citizens lose confidence in the government's ability to provide safety and justice.

Furthermore, electoral violence exacerbates ethnic and religious tensions, especially in regions with historical grievances. This fragility opens the door to insurgency, banditry, and other forms of insecurity, further threatening national unity. Therefore, the loss of lives and property caused by electoral violence not only disrupts democratic processes but also endangers Nigeria's peace, cohesion, and long-term development. Preventing such violence is crucial to ensuring sustainable national security.

Ethnic tension and crisis: Elections in Nigeria are always marked by the use of ethnicity, superiority, marginalisation, and secession discourse; as a result, they may be used to incite civil war and other crises. Electoral violence in Nigeria often intensifies ethnic tensions and can trigger widespread crises. Politicians frequently mobilize support along ethnic lines, deepening divisions and fostering mistrust among diverse groups (Obiam, 2024). When elections are marred by violence, ethnic communities may feel targeted or marginalized, leading to retaliatory attacks and communal clashes. This not only undermines national unity but also escalates insecurity across regions. The perception of electoral injustice can further entrench ethnic grievances, fueling cycles of violence. Such tensions weaken democratic institutions, hinder peaceful coexistence, and pose a serious threat to the stability and security of the nation.

Overall escalation of conflict: The tension during election crisis and violence could instigate wider conflicts between or amongst various groups. The loser and the winner conflict might escalate into full grown national crisis.

The disruption of educational activities in the country: Due to disruptions caused by political chaos, the school calendar has been extended. This has a negative impact on how long a student attends school, increasing the cost to parents. It is also concerning since it exposes students to social vices such prostitution, armed robbery, drug addiction, and alcoholism, among others (Aver et al, 2013).

Conflict in social interrelationship: The violence diminishes people's respect for one another's lives and contradicts peaceful coexistence. Crime and vices increase in a society where people can be killed with ease.

2.9 Theoretical Framework

2.9.1 System Theory

The study's theoretical framework is the Eastonian system analysis of the political system. System theory was developed by political scientist David Easton in 1953 to explain the political system. At its core, system theory views a political system as a set of interconnected and interdependent parts that work together to maintain stability and respond to societal demands (Hanumanthappa, 2023). The focus of the approach on the analysis of factors and forces that engender stability and instability in the political system strengthens its relevance to explaining the deep linkage between the dysfunctionality in governance and the challenges of poverty, inequality and insecurity in Nigeria's fourth republic. The political system within the Eastonian framework is an input and out-put mechanism which deals with political decisions and activities and performs integrative and adaptive functions relevant to the transformation of the society (Omodia & Aliu, 2013; Johari, 2011). The theory emphasizes inputs (such as public demands and support), processes (such as decision-making and policy implementation), outputs (such as laws and policies), and feedback mechanisms that help the system adapt and respond to internal and external pressures.

Applying system theory to Nigeria's political environment, elections serve as a primary input into the political system. System theory offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing the relationship between elections and national security in Nigeria. Citizens express their demands, preferences, and expectations through voting. These inputs are expected to be processed through credible electoral institutions, resulting in outputs such as elected representatives and new policies (Blais, Laslier & Poinas, 2015). However, when this process is distorted—through

electoral fraud, violence, voter suppression, or insecurity—the system fails to function effectively, leading to instability and weakened national security.

National security, on the other hand, represents both a prerequisite and an output of a stable political system. If the electoral process is perceived as unfair or manipulated, the feedback loop becomes negative. Citizens lose trust in the system, which may result in protests, civil disobedience, insurgency, or secessionist agitation. Nigeria's experience with post-election violence, particularly after the 2011 and 2019 general elections, illustrates this feedback breakdown. Electoral injustice has often been cited by groups such as Boko Haram and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) as part of their justification for anti-state activities (Omonijo, Anyaegbunam & Okoye, 2022).

In system theory, a malfunction in one part of the system affects the entire structure (Hanumanthappa, 2023). In Nigeria, insecurity caused by terrorism, communal violence, and banditry often disrupts the electoral process. For example, INEC may be unable to conduct elections in certain areas due to violence or threats, resulting in voter disenfranchisement. When citizens are excluded from participating in governance due to insecurity, the system's input is compromised, leading to outputs that lack legitimacy and do not reflect the people's will.

Moreover, system theory helps explain the role of institutions—such as INEC, the judiciary, and security agencies—as vital components within the political system. Their efficiency, neutrality, and responsiveness determine whether the electoral process can produce legitimate governance and foster national security. When these institutions are weak, biased, or politicized, they contribute to systemic breakdowns, increasing the likelihood of election-related conflict and long-term instability.

Furthermore, system theory emphasizes adaptation. For the Nigerian political system to remain stable and secure, it must adapt to internal and external pressures by reforming its electoral processes, enhancing institutional integrity, and addressing security threats proactively. A resilient system requires timely feedback from the public and appropriate policy responses from the government. The system theory provides a useful lens for understanding how the electoral process and national security are deeply interconnected in Nigeria. The failure or weakness of one component—whether elections, institutions, or security leads to broader systemic instability that threatens national security.

2.9.2 Human Security Theory

National security has traditionally been defined in terms of protecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state against external aggression. However, in recent decades, this narrow, state-centered understanding has shifted towards a broader, people-centered perspective (Rahman, 2023). The human security theory was advanced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1994, redefines security beyond military concerns to include protection of individuals from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, unemployment, repression, and violent conflict (Tadjbakhsh, 2005). It emphasizes seven key dimensions: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security.

Economic insecurity significantly influences electoral behaviour and outcomes in Nigeria. High unemployment, poverty, and inequality make citizens vulnerable to vote-buying and manipulation (Oni, Faluyi, Asumu & Olutola, 2025). Political actors exploit economic deprivation by offering money, food, or material benefits in exchange for votes. Furthermore, economic hardship fuels political apathy, as many citizens prioritize survival over civic participation. Weak economic structures also encourage elite capture of electoral processes,

where politics becomes a means of personal enrichment rather than national development (Rahman, 2023). Thus, the lack of economic security undermines free choice and perpetuates corrupt electoral practices.

Food insecurity contributes indirectly to electoral instability in Nigeria. Many rural voters, who rely on subsistence agriculture, are often manipulated through promises of agricultural subsidies or fertilizer distribution. During elections, food items such as rice or grains are used as tools of patronage and vote inducement. This not only reflects economic desperation but also reduces the moral legitimacy of elections, as hunger is politicized to gain electoral advantage.

Health insecurity affects voter participation and electoral credibility. Inadequate healthcare and poor living conditions often reduce citizens' physical ability and willingness to vote. Furthermore, health insecurity is exacerbated by violence and stress associated with elections, including injuries and deaths from electoral clashes (Oni, Faluyi, Asumu & Olutola, 2025).

Environmental challenges such as flooding, desertification, and pollution—impact electoral logistics and access to polling centers, particularly in rural areas. Displacement caused by natural disasters or environmental degradation can disenfranchise citizens who cannot reach their registered voting locations. Moreover, environmental neglect reflects poor governance, influencing citizens' electoral decisions and trust in government institutions.

Personal security is one of the most visible dimensions during Nigerian elections. Electoral violence, intimidation, thuggery, and assassinations have become recurrent features. Many voters fear for their safety during campaigns and elections, leading to low turnout and disillusionment. Politicians often use violence as a tool to suppress opposition or influence outcomes, undermining citizens' confidence in the democratic process.

Nigeria's ethnic and religious diversity often shapes electoral politics. Weak community security, characterized by inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions, fuels identity-based voting and post-election conflicts. Politicians exploit communal divisions to mobilize support, often resulting in violence and polarization that weaken national unity.

Political insecurity manifests through electoral malpractice, weak institutions, and lack of trust in the electoral system. Manipulation by political elites, compromised electoral bodies, and poor governance erode confidence in democracy (Rahman, 2023). When citizens feel their votes do not count, they lose faith in political participation, threatening the legitimacy of the state. In summary, the Nigerian electoral process cannot be understood outside the framework of human security. The seven dimensions reveal how socio-economic deprivation, violence, and weak institutions interact to produce insecurity before, during, and after elections. Strengthening human security—through inclusive economic policies, peacebuilding, and institutional reforms—is therefore essential for achieving credible, free, and fair elections in Nigeria.

Using this framework, elections in Nigeria can be analyzed not only as political contests but also as events with direct implications for national security and human well-being.

Nigeria's elections have often been characterized by intense competition, ethnic and religious polarization, vote-buying, electoral fraud, and violence (Isma'ila & Othman, 2015). These challenges undermine both the credibility of democratic governance and the safety of citizens. From a human security perspective, electoral insecurity is not only about ballot manipulation but also about the erosion of people's political rights, economic vulnerabilities created by corrupt governance, and the violence that disrupts communities. Thus, elections become flashpoints where human insecurity translates into national security threats.

Political Security is a central concern during Nigerian elections. Citizens' freedom to participate in governance, express opinions, and choose leaders without intimidation is often compromised (Oni, Faluyi, Asumu & Olutola, 2025). Instances of voter suppression, harassment of opposition candidates, and militarization of the electoral process reflect deep deficits in political security. When political institutions fail to guarantee fairness and inclusivity, people lose trust in democracy, leading to protests, apathy, or violent resistance. The 2019 and 2023 general elections, for example, witnessed widespread allegations of rigging, suppression, and manipulation, which generated post-election unrest and heightened insecurity in many parts of the country (Roberts, Ekot, Okpan & Okpanocha, 2025).

Personal and community security are also threatened during elections. Electoral violence ranging from clashes among political thugs to targeted attacks on polling units directly endangers lives and property (International Crisis Group, 2023). Communities, particularly in volatile regions such as the Niger Delta, the Middle Belt, and parts of the South-East, often experience heightened tension during elections. Politicians exploit ethnic and religious identities to mobilize support, which deepens social fragmentation and triggers communal violence. In such contexts, elections do not promote unity but instead fuel insecurity, leaving individuals and groups feeling unsafe within their own communities.

Economic and food security are further undermined by electoral malpractices and governance failures. When elections are rigged, leaders lack legitimacy and may prioritize personal enrichment over public welfare (Aluaigba, 2016). This perpetuates corruption, mismanagement of resources, and poor service delivery, which in turn deepens poverty and unemployment. Economic deprivation and hunger push citizens—especially youths—into political thuggery,

ballot snatching, or violence for financial gain. Thus, flawed elections create a vicious cycle where insecurity persists because the economic foundations of human security remain weak.

Health and environmental security also intersect with electoral processes. During violent elections, people are injured, displaced, or denied access to healthcare (Badmus, 2017). In addition, environmental challenges such as flooding or poor infrastructure limit voter participation, especially in rural areas, thereby undermining inclusive democracy and reinforcing insecurity. The human security perspective shows that Nigeria's electoral process is not just a political event but a multidimensional determinant of national security. If citizens feel unsafe, unheard, and unprotected during elections, their alienation can escalate into widespread instability. On the other hand, credible, free, and fair elections can strengthen trust in governance, enhance political legitimacy, and reduce grievances that often trigger conflict (Udochukwu, Ojo & Aideloje, 2024).

For Nigeria to achieve both democratic consolidation and national security, electoral reforms must be guided by the principles of human security. Strengthening political security requires independent institutions like the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to ensure transparency and fairness (Agbai, Boufini & Adesanya, 2024; Thompson, Idris, Ademola & Obi). Promoting community and personal security demands proactive policing, early-warning systems, and disarmament of political thugs. Moreover, inclusive participation of women, youths, and marginalized groups is essential for ensuring that elections are not only peaceful but also reflective of the diverse voices in society.

In summary, the theory provides a holistic framework for understanding the link between elections and national security in Nigeria. It highlights that the true measure of electoral success is not only who wins or loses but whether the process guarantees the safety, dignity, and welfare

of citizens. By nailing to mud the political, personal, economic, and community insecurities associated with elections, Nigeria can strengthen its democracy and build a stable national security architecture rooted in the well-being of its people.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The chapter provides information about the research approaches and procedures that was adopted and utilized in this study.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts the survey research design in carrying the study. Survey research design is a systematic method used to collect data from a population through questionnaires, interviews, or structured instruments. It is applicable to both qualitative and quantitative research. In quantitative studies, surveys use structured questions and numerical data to measure variables, test hypotheses, and analyze relationships using statistical techniques. In qualitative research, surveys may include open-ended questions that allow respondents to express opinions, experiences, and perceptions in their own words. This design enables researchers to gather large amounts of data from diverse participants, making it useful for examining social behaviours, attitudes, and trends while ensuring reliability, comparability, and broader generalization of research findings. In the view of Osemwota, Okhakhu & Tonwe (2007), survey research has gained popularity in recent years as a scientific tool for determining the influence and inter-relationships of social and psychological variables in a particular population.

More specifically, survey research examines large and small populations by examining samples chosen from the population to determine the relative occurrence, distribution, and inter-relationships of sociological and psychological variables (Bryman, 2012).

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study is made up of 3,233,366 (NBS, 2010) men and women of voting age (18 years and above) residing in Edo State. The population of the study refers to the entire group

of individuals, events, or elements that share common characteristics relevant to a research investigation. It represents the total set from which a sample is drawn and to which the findings of the study are intended to be generalized. The population of study is the entire group of individuals, organizations, or elements that share common characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Bryman, 2012). It represents the complete set from which data is collected and conclusions are drawn Accordingly, Bryman (2012) defined research population as the total of all elements of units of analysis that a study is interested in.

3.3 Sample Size

The sample size for this study is 400 using the Taro Yamane formula. The computation of sample size using Taro Yamane's formula for the study:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where: n = Sample size
 N = Population size
 e = Sample error or level of significance is 0.05.

$$3,233,366$$

$$n = \frac{3,233,366}{1 + 3,233,366 (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{3,233,366}{1 + 8083.42}$$

$$n = \frac{3,233,366}{8084.42}$$

$$n = 399.95$$

$$n = 400$$

3.4 Sampling Technique

The research adopts the stratified random sampling method to select three Local Government Areas from Edo State while the simple random sampling method will be used in the selection of local government areas (Akoko Edo, Igueben, Uhunmwode) for the administration of the research instrument on the respondents for this study. Also, the study adopts the simple random sampling in selecting the wards in each of the three local government areas in the administration of the research instrument. Thus, the research survey was carried out among the people residing in these three local government areas of Edo State. A total number of 400 questionnaires were administered to the respondents to seek their perception on the issues raised in the study. Also 12 elder state-men and women (4 from each senatorial district) were interviewed to give more insight that aids data from the questionnaire administration. The judgmental sampling method was used to administer the interview session with the respondents of the study.

3.5 Research Instrument

The questionnaire and interview guide research tool was used in this study. To get information from respondents, a self-design questionnaire was used. There were two sections to the questionnaire. Section A contains the respondents' biographical information, whereas Section B deals with the key issues surrounding elections and its effects on national security in Nigeria. Also, the interview guide was also used to gather information for the study.

3.6 Validity of Instrument

To ensure content validity of the research instrument, the questionnaire was submitted to the research supervisor at Department of Political Science, University of Benin and an expert in measurement and evaluation at the Department of Measurement and Evaluation, University of

Benin for scrutiny, corrections and suggestions. The corrections and suggestions made by them will be considered by the researcher in the process of drafting the final copy of the questionnaire.

3.7 Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of an instrument is to its consistency and stability in measuring what it is designed to measure. A reliable instrument produces the same results under consistent conditions, ensuring accuracy, dependability, and credibility of findings, while minimizing errors and enhancing the overall quality of research outcomes. In order to ensure the internal consistency of the research instrument, it will be subjected to reliability test. In doing this, a pilot study using the survey method was adopted in administering the questionnaire to 20 residences of Egor Local Government Area in Benin City.

3.8 Method of Data Collection

To reduce the mortality rate of the instrument, the researcher personally administered the questionnaire to the respondents in the selected local government area. A total of four hundred (400) questionnaires were administered to the residence which was immediately collected from the respondents. This was done to ensure that the researcher record high rate of collection in the questionnaire administration.

3.9 Method of Data Analysis

Two statistical tools of data analysis were deployed in the analysis of data derived from the field. They are the simple percentage and the Pearson correlation. The simple percentage which is a descriptive tool for statistics was used for initial analysis, while the Pearson correlation which is an inferential tool was employed in testing the hypotheses generated from the survey. Again, the thematic analysis was used to analyse the data gathered through the interview guide.

3.10 Ethical Considerations in the Study

The research was carried out in a way that conforms to the ethical principles and best international practices. Indeed, The UK-based Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) developed a set of fundamental ethical guidelines for researchers and their subjects in 2005. According to the ESRC (2005) and Aldred (2008), these principles include (i) safety or security, (ii) informed consent, (iii) objectivity, (iv) anonymity, (v) neutrality, and (vi) justice.

The researcher will abstain from actions that will endanger him or his field assistants in accordance with the principle of safety or security. This was accomplished by remaining diplomatic at all times and refusing to commit on delicate subjects. Likewise, adhering to the principle of informed consent, every respondent's affirmative consent was requested regarding every facet of their involvement in the study. Furthermore, research participants receive information about their rights, which include the ability to resign from the project at any time.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter provides the empirical findings that the researcher had gathered for the study. In this chapter data are presented, analyzed and interpreted. The relevant data gathered from practical field work was presented and analyzed using the methodology afore specified.

4.1 Data Analysis

4.1.1: Research Instrument Administration

Table 4.0: Questionnaire Administration and Collection

| Questionnaire Administration | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Number issued | 400 | 100 |
| Number of valid responses | 356 | 89 |
| Number of invalid responses | 44 | 11 |

Source: Fieldwork (2025).

A total 400 questionnaires were administered to respondents, 356 was retrieved and analyzed, representing a response rate of 89%, where the remaining 44 representing 11% of the sampled respondents were either wrongly answered, destroyed and un-retrievable. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 was adopted as statistical package, using Simple Percentage, Pie-Chart and Pearson Correlation in analyzing the variables in the study.

Section A: Analyses of Respondents Bio-Data

Table 4.1: Gender Distribution of Respondents (n = 356)

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid Male | 325 | 91.4 | 91.4 | 91.4 |
| Female | 31 | 8.6 | 8.6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 356 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Researcher's Field work, (2025).

Figure 1:

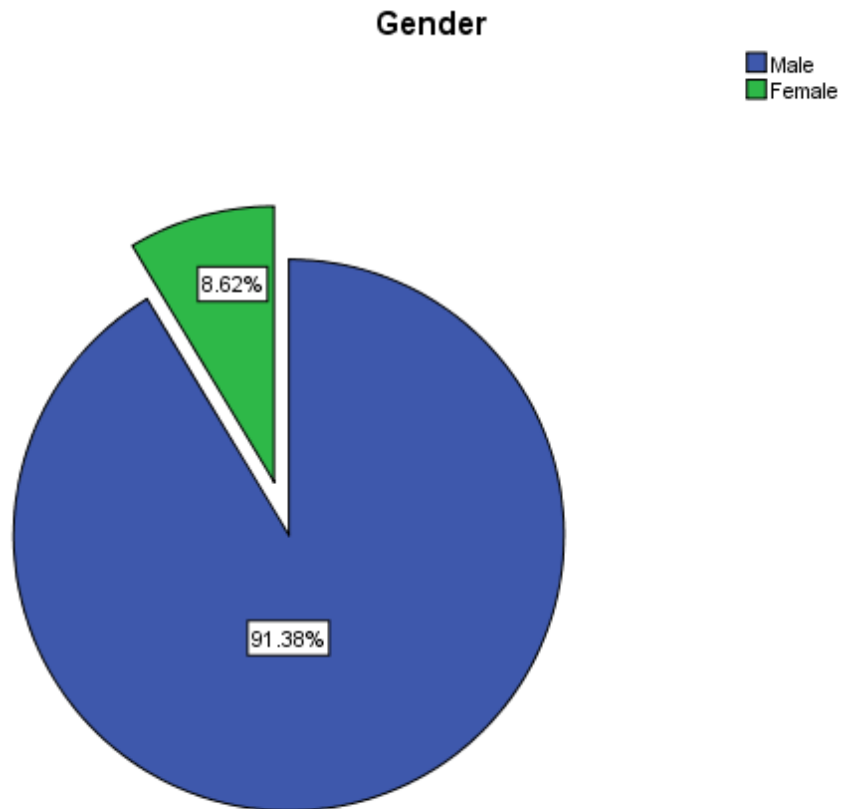


Table 4.1 and figure 1 of the study shows that 325 respondents, representing 91.4% of the total respondents that participated in the survey of the respondents, were male while 31 representing

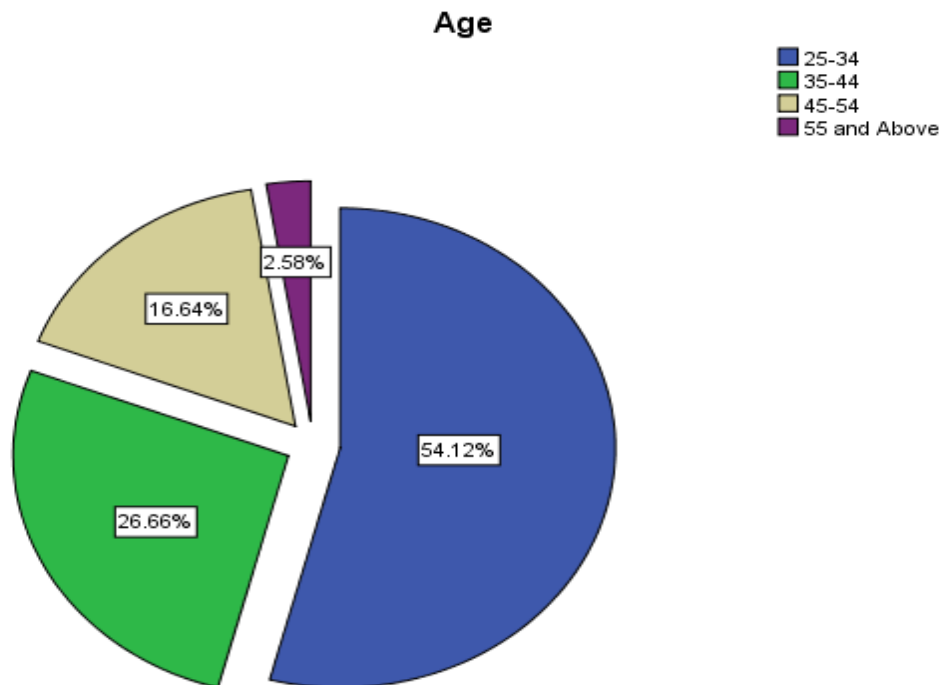
8.6% of the respondents were female. Thus, it implies that from the analysis of data from the study survey, more male participated in the study than female counterparts.

Table 4.2: Age Distribution of Respondents (N=356)

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|--------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| 25-34 | 193 | 54.1 | 54.1 | 54.1 |
| 35-44 | 95 | 26.7 | 26.7 | 80.8 |
| Valid 45-54 | 59 | 16.6 | 16.6 | 97.4 |
| 55 and Above | 9 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 356 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Fieldwork (2025).

Figure 2:



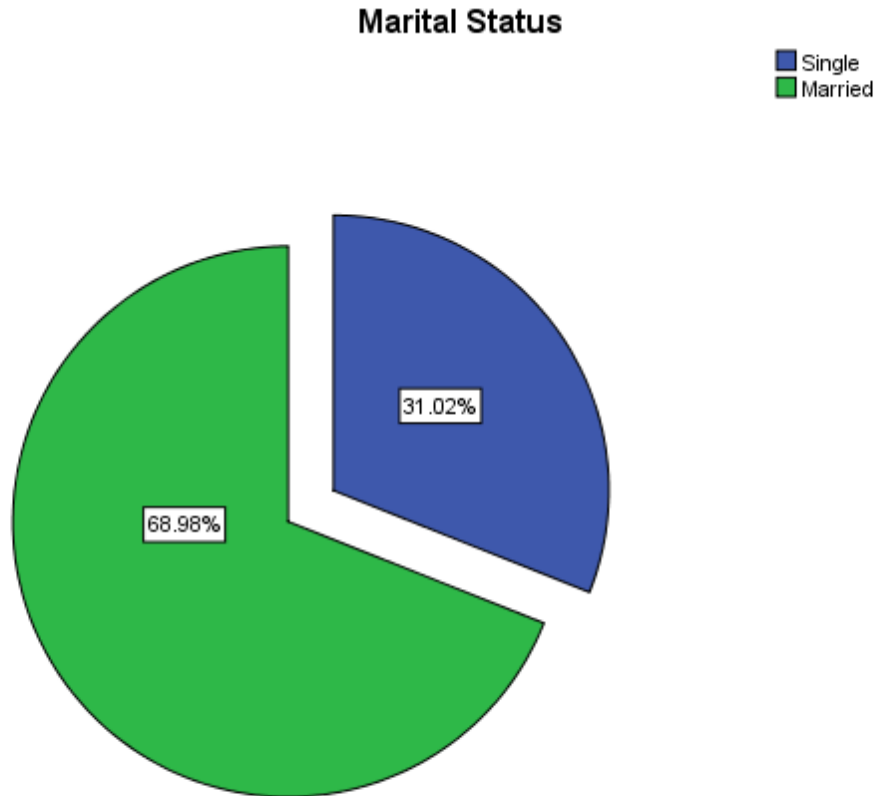
From Table 4.2 and figure 2 of the study’s survey, it was discovered that 193 respondents representing 54.1% of the respondents were between 25-34 years of age, 95 respondents representing 26.7% were between 35-44 years of age, 59 respondents representing 16.6% were between 45-54 years of age while the remaining 9 respondents representing 2.6% were 55 years and above. This implies that the respondents that are 25-34 years of age were the majority in the study, followed by respondents in the age bracket 35-44 years, followed by 45-54 years of age and lastly, the participants in the age bracket 55 years and above.

Table 4.3: Marital Status Distribution of Respondents (N=356)

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Single | 110 | 31.0 | 31.0 | 31.0 |
| Valid Married | 246 | 69.0 | 69.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 356 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Fieldwork (2025).

Figure 3:



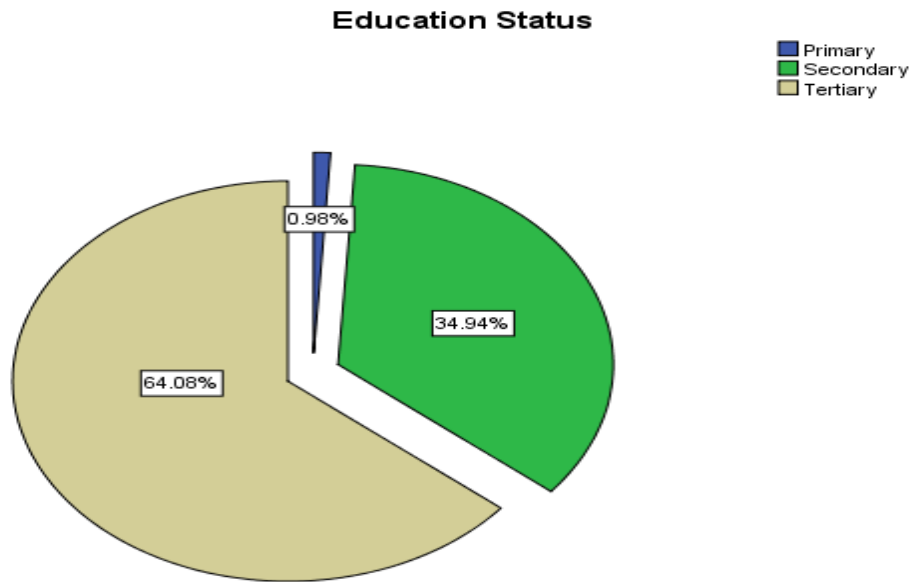
In the data above, out of 356 sampled respondents in the study, 110 respondents representing 31.0% were single while the married respondents were 246 representing 69.0% of the respondents. Therefore, the data analysed indicate that most of the respondents who took part in the study were married men and women.

Table 4.4: Educational Distribution of Respondents (n = 356)

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Primary | 4 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| | Secondary | 124 | 34.9 | 34.9 | 35.9 |
| | Tertiary | 228 | 64.1 | 64.1 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 356 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Researcher's Field work, (2025).

Figure 4:



The data above shows that respondents with primary school leaving certificate (FSLC) are 4 representing 1% of the respondents sampled, those with secondary certificate are 124 respondents representing 34.9% of the respondents while those with tertiary certificate degree holders are 228 representing 64.1% of the respondents that participated in the study. It thus indicates that, respondents that are tertiary certificate holders participated more in this study than the primary school leaving certificate and secondary certificate holders. Furthermore, the analysis of the study shows that the respondents that participated in the study are knowledgeable men and women with good educational background that can contribute meaningfully to the study.

Table 4.5: Religion Distribution of Respondents (n = 356)

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Christianity | 312 | 87.7 | 87.7 | 87.7 |
| Islam | 41 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 99.2 |
| African Traditional Religion | 3 | .8 | .8 | 100.0 |
| Total | 356 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field Survey, (2025)

Figure 5:

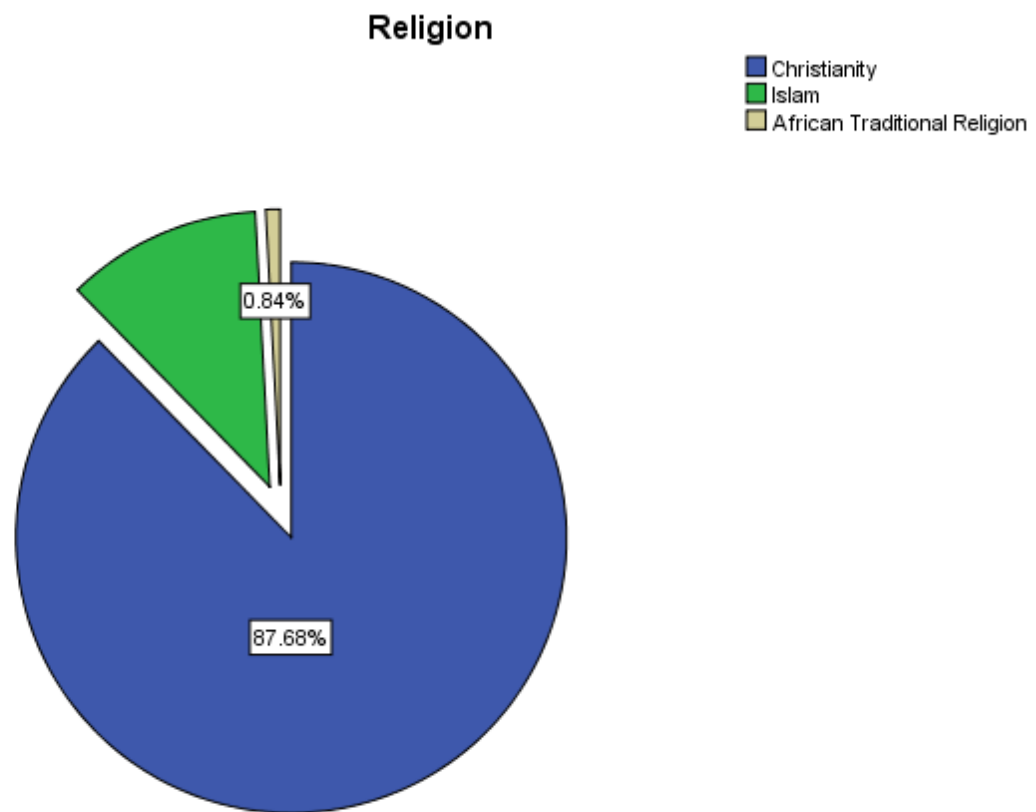


Table 6 shows that 312 respondents representing 87.7% of the respondents are Christians, 41 respondents representing 22% are Muslims while the remaining 3 respondents representing 0.8% belongs to the ATR. This implies that more Christians participated in the study more than Muslims and ATR.

Table 4.6: Respondents response on the impact of electoral credibility on national security in the 2019 and 2023

| S/ N | ITEMS | Responses | | | | | | |
|---------|---|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| | | SA 5 F(%) | A 4 F(%) | U 3 F (%) | D 2 F(%) | SD 1 F(%) | Mean (X) | Decision |
| 1 | Electoral transparency contributes to national unity and political stability | 267 (75.0%) | 72 (20.2%) | 11 (3.2%) | 3 (0.8%) | 3 (0.8%) | 4.67 | Accepted |
| 2 | A credible electoral process strengthens the legitimacy of government and national security efforts | 243 (68.3%) | 95 (26.8%) | 9 (2.4%) | 6 (1.6%) | 3 (0.8%) | 4.60 | Accepted |
| 3 | Strengthening electoral credibility is essential for improving Nigeria's overall security landscape | 221 (62.2%) | 109 (30.5%) | 3 (0.8%) | 17 (4.8%) | 6 (1.6%) | 4.47 | Accepted |
| 4 | Lack of electoral credibility increases the risk of insecurity in Nigeria | 244 (68.5%) | 85 (23.9%) | 16 (4.4%) | 9 (2.4%) | 3 (0.8%) | 4.57 | Accepted |
| 5 | Credible elections will reduce the likelihood of post-election violence in Nigeria | 176 (49.4%) | 145 (40.5%) | 21 (6.0%) | 11 (3.2%) | 3 (0.8%) | 4.35 | Accepted |

Source: Field Survey, (2025)

Interpretation

Key: S-A- Strongly Agree; A- Agree; D-Disagree; S-D- Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

The mean results of the data in items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of research question one of the study is **4.67, 4.60, 4.47, 4.57 and 4.35** respectively. Thus, the data analyzed indicates that the respondents accepted the questions raised in item 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the research question one of the study. In order to ascertain the impact of electoral credibility on national security in the 2019 and 2023, the analysis of the data revealed that the respondents accepted that electoral transparency contributes to national unity and political stability, the respondents also accepts that credible electoral process strengthens the legitimacy of government and national security efforts, they affirmed that strengthening electoral credibility is essential for improving Nigeria's overall security landscape, lack of electoral credibility increases the risk of insecurity in Nigeria and finally they accepted that credible elections will reduce the likelihood of post-election violence in Nigeria.

To complement the above analysis on the impact of electoral credibility on national security in the 2019 and 2023, an interviewee posited that:

“In both 2019 and 2023 elections, allegations of vote manipulation, voter intimidation, and irregularities in the collation process created distrust among citizens and political actors. This distrust led to protests and heightened political tension in several states. When electoral outcomes are perceived as lacking credibility, it weakens public confidence in democratic institutions and may trigger

violence, political instability, and security challenges across the country” (IDI 1, 2026).

Another stakeholder interviewed stated that:

“From my perspective, electoral credibility directly influences national security because credible elections promote legitimacy and public trust in government. In both the 2019 and 2023 elections, concerns about electoral irregularities created anxiety among voters and political stakeholders. When people believe that the electoral process is unfair, they may resort to protests or violence to express their dissatisfaction” (IDI 2, 2026).

One of the interviewees responded thus:

“The 2019 general election showed how fragile national security can become when the credibility of elections is questioned. Delays in the announcement of results, reports of vote buying, and allegations of manipulation generated suspicion among the public. In some areas, clashes between party supporters and security forces were reported. The situation demonstrated that electoral integrity is not only a democratic issue but also a critical factor in maintaining peace and stability” (IDI 3, 2026).

Again, another interviewee asserts that:

“In the 2023 elections, the introduction of new technologies such as electronic voter accreditation raised expectations among citizens for more transparent elections. However, technical challenges and delays in uploading results created doubts about the credibility of the process. These concerns increased political tension and public frustration in many communities. When electoral systems fail to meet expectations, it can lead to widespread mistrust that may threaten national security and democratic stability” (IDI 4, 2026).

One of the respondents stated that:

“Electoral credibility helps prevent conflict because people are more likely to accept election outcomes when the process is transparent and fair. In the 2019 and 2023 elections, accusations of electoral malpractice and vote buying undermined confidence in the democratic process. This created divisions among political supporters and sometimes resulted in violent confrontations” (IDI 5, 2026).

Another interviewee reiterated that:

“The credibility of elections influences how citizens perceive the legitimacy of their leaders. During the 2019

and 2023 elections, many voters expressed concerns about irregularities, particularly in areas where election results did not reflect their expectations. These perceptions can create political grievances and distrust toward government institutions” (IDI 6, 2026).

An interviewee posited that:

“In my opinion, credible elections are essential for maintaining peace in a diverse country like Nigeria. When the electoral process is transparent and inclusive, it reduces tensions among political parties and ethnic groups. However, when elections are perceived as manipulated, it can deepen existing divisions and create security threats. The controversies surrounding the 2019 and 2023 elections illustrate how electoral disputes can influence political stability and national security” (IDI 7, 2026).

One of the respondents interviewed stated unequivocally that:

“The impact of electoral credibility on national security became evident in the aftermath of the 2019 elections. Several communities experienced political tensions due to disputes over election results. Some supporters of opposition parties organized demonstrations to challenge the outcomes. Although many protests were peaceful, the

potential for violence remained high. This shows that credible electoral processes are necessary to prevent conflict and ensure national stability” (IDI 8, 2026).

Furthermore, one of the politicians who responded to the interview stated that:

“During the 2023 elections, many citizens expected improvements in transparency due to reforms in the electoral process. However, when technical and administrative challenges occurred, some voters interpreted them as attempts to manipulate the results. This perception created frustration and increased political polarization” (IDI 9, 2026).

Buttressing further, another respondent reiterated that:

“Frankly speaking, the issue of national security globally is closely connected to the legitimacy of political leadership, which is derived from credible elections. In the 2019 and 2023 elections, reports of electoral violence, voter suppression, and result disputes raised concerns among observers and citizens. Such issues discourage political participation and increase dissatisfaction with the democratic process. If unresolved, these tensions can contribute to instability and weaken the overall security environment in the country” (IDI 10, 2026).

Moreso, one of the respondents interviewed stated that:

“An important issue is the role of security agencies during elections. In both the 2019 and 2023 elections, there were accusations of excessive force and partisan behavior by some security personnel. When security agencies are perceived as biased, it undermines the credibility of the electoral process and may provoke resistance from the public” (IDI 11, 2026).

Lastly, a respondent interviewed stated that:

“Frankly, the experiences of the 2019 and 2023 elections demonstrate that credible electoral processes are essential for political stability and national security. When citizens trust the electoral system, they are more likely to accept the results and cooperate with government institutions. On the other hand, when credibility is compromised, it leads to political tensions, protests, and sometimes violence. Strengthening electoral transparency, accountability, and public confidence is therefore critical for safeguarding national security in Nigeria” (IDI 12, 2026).

Table 4.7: Respondents response on the impacts of voters’ education on national security in the 2019 and 2023

| S/ | ITEMS | Responses |
|----|-------|-----------|
|----|-------|-----------|

| N | | SA 5 F(%) | A 4 F(%) | U 3 F (%) | D 2 F(%) | SD 1 F(%) | Mean (X) | Decision |
|----------|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 6 | Well-informed voters are less likely to be manipulated into engaging in political unrest | 131 (21.2%) | 358 (57.8%) | 88 (14.2%) | 37 (6.0%) | 5 (0.8%) | 3.93 | Accepted |
| 7 | Voter education discourages the use of violence as a tool for political expression | 163 (26.3%) | 400 (64.6%) | 39 (6.3%) | 5 (0.8%) | 12 (1.9%) | 4.13 | Accepted |
| 8 | Voters education and public awareness campaigns during elections help promote peaceful participation and reduces the likelihood of electoral violence in Nigeria | 125 (20.2%) | 396 (64.0%) | 76 (12.3%) | 17 (2.7%) | 5 (0.8%) | 4.00 | Accepted |
| 9 | Voter education fosters tolerance and respect for diverse political views | 175 (28.3%) | 363 (58.6%) | 61 (9.9%) | 15 (2.4%) | 5 (0.8%) | 4.11 | Accepted |
| 10 | Communities with higher levels of civic awareness experience fewer election-related conflicts | 220 (35.5%) | 352 (56.9%) | 27 (4.4%) | 15 (2.4%) | 5 (0.8%) | 4.24 | Accepted |

Source: Field Survey, (2025)

Interpretation

Key: S-A- Strongly Agree; A- Agree; D-Disagree; S-D- Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

The mean results of the data in items 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of research question two of the study is **3.93, 4.13, 4.00, 4.11 and 4.24** respectively. Thus, the data analyzed indicates that the respondents accepted the questions raised in item 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of research question two of the study. In order to ascertain the impacts of voters' education on national security in the 2019 and 2023s, the analysis of the data revealed that the respondents accepted that a well-informed voters are less likely to be manipulated into engaging in political unrest, voter education discourages the use of violence as a tool for political expression, voters education and public awareness campaigns during elections help promote peaceful participation and reduces the likelihood of electoral violence in Nigeria, voter education fosters tolerance and respect for diverse political views and finally accepted that communities with higher levels of civic awareness experience fewer election-related conflicts.

The in-depth interview respondents gave more insights on the impacts of voters' education on national security in the 2019 and 2023.

An interviewee posited that:

“Voter education played an important role in shaping public awareness during the 2019 and 2023 general elections in Nigeria. Many citizens who participated in voter education programs understood the importance of peaceful participation and respecting electoral procedures. This awareness helped to reduce violent confrontations at polling units in some areas” (IDI 1, 2026).

One of the interviewees responded thus:

“In my opinion, voter education significantly influences national security because it helps citizens understand the electoral process and discourages manipulation. During the 2019 and 2023 elections, several civic organizations and the Independent National Electoral Commission conducted voter awareness campaigns. These programs educated voters about the importance of peaceful voting and the consequences of electoral violence. As a result, many voters became more cautious and resisted attempts by political actors to incite violence” (IDI 2, 2026).

Again, another interviewee asserts that:

“The level of voter education in the 2019 elections helped some communities to maintain order during the voting process. Through radio programs, town hall meetings, and social media campaigns, citizens were informed about the need for peaceful participation. This awareness helped reduce misinformation and panic during the election period” (IDI 3, 2026).

One of the respondents stated that:

“During the 2023 elections, voter education campaigns emphasized the use of new electoral technologies and the need for patience during the voting and result collation

processes. Although some technical challenges occurred, educated voters were more likely to remain calm and follow electoral guidelines. This demonstrates that voter education contributes to national security by encouraging tolerance, discipline, and respect for democratic procedures among the electorate” (IDI 4, 2026).

Another interviewee reiterated that:

“One important impact of voter education is that it helps reduce the influence of vote buying and electoral manipulation. In the 2019 and 2023 elections, some voters who had received civic education refused to sell their votes because they understood the long-term consequences for governance and national stability” (IDI 5, 2026).

An interviewee posited that:

“Voter education also helps people understand the importance of accepting election outcomes peacefully. In the 2019 and 2023 elections, some voters were aware that disputes should be resolved through legal channels rather than violence. This awareness encouraged political supporters to rely on electoral tribunals and judicial processes instead of protests that could escalate into

security crises. Such civic understanding contributes to maintaining peace during election periods” (IDI 6, 2026).

One of the respondents interviewed stated unequivocally that:

“From my observation, voter education improved political participation among young people during the 2023 elections. Many youths became more informed about their voting rights and responsibilities through social media campaigns and civic engagement programs. When young voters understand democratic values, they are less likely to participate in electoral violence or political thuggery. This helps to reduce security threats that often occur during election periods” (IDI 7, 2026).

Furthermore, one of the statesmen who responded to the interview stated that:

“One important impact of voter education is the reduction of electoral misinformation. During the 2019 and 2023 elections, rumors and fake news circulated widely on social media. However, voters who had received proper civic education were able to question such information and avoid reacting violently” (IDI 8, 2026).

Buttressing further, another respondent reiterated that:

Voter education programs also encouraged community leaders and civil society groups to promote peaceful elections. In both the 2019 and 2023 elections, religious leaders, traditional rulers, and community organizations organized sensitization programs to discourage violence (IDI 9, 2026).

Moreso, one of the respondents interviewed stated that:

“The impact of voter education can also be seen in the increased willingness of citizens to report electoral misconduct 2023 than in 2019. During the 2023 elections, many voters used digital platforms and observer channels to report irregularities rather than engaging in direct confrontation. This behavior demonstrates that civic education helps manage conflicts peacefully and support the work of electoral authorities and security agencies” (IDI 10, 2026).

Furthermore, another interviewee posited that:

“I can tell you that voter education strengthens public confidence in democratic institutions. When voters understand the roles of electoral bodies, security agencies, and election observers, they are more likely to cooperate with them during the election process. In the 2019 and

2023 elections, educated voters showed greater patience and compliance with electoral rules, which helped maintain order and reduce security tensions at polling stations” (IDI 11, 2026).

Lastly, a respondent interviewed stated that:

Overall, voter education has a strong connection with national security because informed citizens are more likely to participate peacefully in elections. In the 2019 and 2023 elections, civic education initiatives encouraged tolerance, political awareness, and respect for democratic values. When voters are properly informed, they are less vulnerable to political manipulation and violence, thereby helping to maintain stability and security within the country (IDI 12, 2026).

Table 4.8: Respondents response on the effects of electoral violence on national security in the 2019 and 2023?

| S/ N | ITEMS | Responses | | | | | | |
|---------|---|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | SA 5 F(%) | A 4 F(%) | U 3 F (%) | D 2 F(%) | SD 1 F(%) | Mea n (X) | Decision |
| 11 | Electoral violence poses a major threat to national security in Nigeria | 122 | 162 | 54 | 15 | 3 | 4.08 | Accepted |

| | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| | | (34.2%) | (45.4%) | (15.2%) | (4.4%) | (0.8%) | | |
| 12 | Frequent electoral violence weakens citizens' trust in the state's ability to provide security | 163 (45.9%) | 155 (43.5%) | 25 (7.1%) | 10 (2.7%) | 3 (0.8%) | 4.31 | Accepted |
| 13 | Insecurity during elections discourages voter participation and weakens democracy | 98 (27.6%) | 210 (59.0%) | 35 (9.9%) | 10 (2.7%) | 3 (0.8%) | 4.10 | Accepted |
| 14 | The destruction of lives and property during elections undermines national stability | 96 (27.1%) | 218 (61.2%) | 33 (9.2%) | 6 (1.6%) | 3 (0.8%) | 4.12 | Accepted |
| 15 | Government's inability to curb electoral violence reflects weakness in national security institutions | 166 (46.5%) | 151 (42.8%) | 16 (4.4%) | 17 (4.7%) | 6 (1.6%) | 4.28 | Accepted |

Source: Field Survey, (2025)

Interpretation

Key: S-A- Strongly Agree; A- Agree; D-Disagree; S-D- Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

The mean results of the data in items 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 of research question three of the study is **4.08, 4.31, 4.10, 4.12 and 4.28** respectively. Thus, the data analyzed indicates that the respondents accepted the questions raised in item 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 of research question three of the study. In order to ascertain the effects of electoral violence on national security in the 2019 and 2023, the analysis of the data revealed that the respondents accepted that electoral violence poses a major threat to national security in Nigeria, again, they accepted that frequent electoral violence weakens citizens' trust in the state's ability to provide security, supported that insecurity

during elections discourages voter participation and weakens democracy, the destruction of lives and property during elections undermines national stability and finally accepted that government's inability to curb electoral violence reflects weakness in national security institutions.

To complement the survey analysis on the effects of electoral violence on national security in the 2019 and 2023, an interviewee posited that:

“Electoral violence during the 2019 and 2023 elections had noticeable implications for national security in Nigeria. In several communities, clashes between political supporters created fear among voters and discouraged participation in the electoral process. Such violence often resulted in the destruction of property and injuries to citizens” (IDI 1, 2026).

One of the interviewees responded thus:

“In my view, electoral violence significantly threatens national security because it creates an atmosphere of fear and instability. During the 2019 and 2023 elections, reports of attacks at polling stations and intimidation of voters discouraged many people from exercising their democratic rights” (IDI 2, 2026).

Again, another interviewee asserts that:

“The effect of electoral violence during the 2019 elections demonstrated how political competition can escalate into serious security problems. In some areas, political thugs disrupted voting processes and attacked electoral officials” (IDI 3, 2026).

One of the respondents stated that:

“During the 2023 elections, incidents of violence in some polling units created tension among voters and election observers. These violent acts delayed the voting process and disrupted the smooth conduct of the elections. When electoral violence occurs, it reduces public confidence in the democratic process and may lead to disputes over election results” (IDI 4, 2026).

Another interviewee reiterated that:

“Electoral violence also affects national security by increasing political polarization among citizens. In both the 2019 and 2023 elections, conflicts between supporters of different political parties sometimes resulted in hostility within communities. Such divisions weaken social cohesion and create long-term tensions that extend beyond the election period” (IDI 5, 2026).

An interviewee posited that:

“Electoral violence results in loss of lives and destruction of property. During the 2019 and 2023 elections, there were reports of violent incidents that led to casualties in some parts of the country. These incidents create fear and insecurity among citizens, particularly in areas where political competition is intense. When lives are lost during elections, it not only undermines democracy but also creates emotional and social instability in affected communities” (IDI 6, 2026).

One of the respondents interviewed stated unequivocally that:

“Electoral violence also places pressure on security institutions responsible for maintaining peace. During election periods, security agencies must deploy large numbers of personnel to polling units and other strategic locations to prevent violence. If violent incidents occur, these agencies may become overwhelmed, especially in areas with limited resources” (IDI 7, 2026).

Furthermore, one of the statesmen who responded to the interview stated that:

“The violence that occurred during the 2019 and 2023 elections also discouraged voter participation in some communities. Many citizens avoided polling stations

because they feared attacks or intimidation by political thugs. Low voter turnout caused by violence can undermine the legitimacy of election results” (IDI 8, 2026).

Buttressing further, another respondent reiterated that:

“Electoral violence often creates opportunities for criminal activities during elections. In some cases during the 2019 and 2023 elections, violent incidents were accompanied by the destruction of electoral materials and attacks on election officials” (IDI 9, 2026).

Moreso, one of the respondents interviewed stated that:

“Another effect of electoral violence is the erosion of public trust in government institutions. When citizens witness violence during elections, they may begin to doubt the ability of the state to provide adequate security” (IDI 10, 2026).

Furthermore, another interviewee posited that:

“Electoral violence during the 2019 and 2023 elections also affected the international image of Nigeria. Reports of violence during elections often attract global attention and may influence how the country is perceived internationally. When a nation is viewed as politically unstable, it can affect diplomatic relations, foreign investment, and

international cooperation. These broader consequences indirectly affect national development and security” (IDI 11, 2026).

Lastly, a respondent interviewed stated that:

“Critically, the experiences of the 2019 and 2023 elections show that electoral violence poses a serious threat to national security. Violent incidents disrupt the electoral process, create fear among citizens, and increase political tensions across communities” (IDI 12, 2026).

Table 4.9: Respondents response on the effects of electoral malpractices on national security in the 2019 and 2023

| S/ N | ITEMS | Responses | | | | | | |
|---------|--|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| | | SA 5 F(%) | A 4 F(%) | U 3 F (%) | D 2 F(%) | SD 1 F(%) | Mean (X) | Decision |
| 16 | Electoral malpractices contribute to the breakdown of law and order in Nigeria | 96 (27.1%) | 189 (53.0%) | 42 (11.8%) | 22 (6.3%) | 9 (1.8%) | 3.97 | Accepted |
| 17 | Widespread election rigging increases the risk of post-election violence | 106 (29.9%) | 205 (57.7%) | 23 (6.5%) | 19 (5.2%) | 3 (0.8%) | 4.11 | Accepted |

| | | | | | | | | |
|----|--|----------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 18 | Electoral malpractice fuels political tension that threatens national peace | 77 (21.5%) | 214 (60.1%) | 50 (14.1%) | 13 (3.6%) | 3 (0.8%) | 3.98 | Accepted |
| 19 | The failure to punish electoral offenders encourages insecurity during future elections | 108 (30.2%) | 216 (60.6%) | 17 (4.8%) | 11 (3.2%) | 4 (1.2%) | 4.05 | Accepted |
| 20 | Electoral malpractice undermines the legitimacy of elected leaders and weakens security governance | 90 (25.2%) | 215 (60.3%) | 36 (10.2%) | 12 (3.6%) | 3 (0.8%) | 4.18 | Accepted |

Source: Field Survey, (2025)

Interpretation

Key: S-A- Strongly Agree; A- Agree; D-Disagree; S-D- Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

The mean results of the data in items 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 of research question four of the study is **3.97, 4.11, 3.98, 4.05 and 4.18** respectively. Thus, the data analyzed indicates that the respondents accepted the questions raised in item 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 of research question four of the study. In order to ascertain the effects of electoral malpractices on national security in the 2019 and 2023, the analysis of the data revealed that the respondents accepted that electoral malpractices contribute to the breakdown of law and order in Nigeria, also, they accepted that widespread election rigging increases the risk of post-election violence, electoral malpractice fuels political tension that threatens national peace, again, the respondents accepted that The failure to punish electoral offenders encourages insecurity during future elections and finally, they accepted that electoral malpractice undermines the legitimacy of elected leaders and weakens security governance.

The in-depth interview respondents gave more insights on the effects of electoral malpractices on national security in the 2019 and 2023 as one of the interviewees posited that:

“Electoral malpractices during the 2019 and 2023 elections had significant implications for national security. Practices such as vote buying, ballot stuffing, and intimidation of voters weakened public confidence in the electoral process. When citizens believe that elections are manipulated, they may become frustrated and distrustful of political institutions” (IDI 1, 2026).

One of the interviewees responded thus:

“In my opinion, electoral malpractices undermine national security because they create political tension and conflict among supporters of different political parties. During the 2019 and 2023 elections, allegations of irregularities in some polling units caused disputes over election outcomes.” (IDI 2, 2026).

Again, another interviewee asserts that:

“One major effect of electoral malpractices is the erosion of public trust in democratic institutions. In both the 2019 and 2023 general elections, the electoral manipulation influenced the results in certain areas” (IDI 3, 2026).

One of the respondents stated that:

“Electoral malpractices also contribute to electoral violence, which directly threatens national security. When voters suspect that results have been manipulated, they may react with anger and organize protests or attacks on political opponents. During the 2019 and 2023 elections, there were reports of confrontations linked to accusations of electoral fraud” (IDI 4, 2026).

Another interviewee reiterated that:

“one important effect of electoral malpractices is the weakening of democratic legitimacy. Leaders who emerge through questionable electoral processes may face challenges in gaining the trust and cooperation of citizens. In the 2019 and 2023 elections, accusations of vote buying and manipulation created doubts about the credibility of some election outcomes” (IDI 5, 2026).

An interviewee posited that:

“Electoral malpractices also create opportunities for political actors to exploit ethnic or regional divisions. When election results are contested, politicians sometimes mobilize supporters along ethnic or community lines to defend their interests. This can deepen social divisions and

increase tensions among communities. In a diverse country like Nigeria, such divisions can escalate into broader conflicts that undermine national unity and security” (IDI 6, 2026).

One of the respondents interviewed stated unequivocally that:

“During the 2019 and 2023 elections, reports of vote buying were widely discussed among voters. Many people believed that financial inducements influenced voter decisions in some areas. This practice undermines the principle of free and fair elections and encourages corruption in the political system. When electoral corruption becomes widespread, it weakens governance structures and indirectly affects national security by promoting instability” (IDI 7, 2026).

Furthermore, one of the statesmen who responded to the interview stated that:

“Electoral malpractices also discourage citizens from participating in future elections. When voters feel that their votes do not count because of manipulation, they may lose interest in the democratic process. Low voter turnout can reduce the legitimacy of elected leaders and create political dissatisfaction among the population. Such dissatisfaction

can lead to protests or civil unrest, which can threaten national security” (IDI 8, 2026).

Buttressing further, another respondent reiterated that:

“Engaging in electoral malpractice disrupts the electoral process itself. During the 2019 and 2023 elections, some polling units experienced delays and confusion due to allegations of ballot tampering and irregularities. These disruptions sometimes led to tension among voters waiting to cast their votes. Such situations increase the risk of violence and create security challenges for electoral officials and law enforcement agencies” (IDI 9, 2026).

Moreso, one of the respondents interviewed stated that:

“Electoral malpractices also affect the international reputation of Nigeria as a democratic nation. When reports of fraud and irregularities emerge during elections, international observers and foreign governments may question the credibility of the electoral process” (IDI 10, 2026).

Furthermore, another interviewee posited that:

“In addition, electoral malpractices often place pressure on the judiciary because many election results become subjects of legal disputes. After the 2019 and 2023

elections, several cases were taken to election tribunals to challenge the outcomes. While the legal process is important for resolving disputes, frequent electoral litigation reflects deep political dissatisfaction and can prolong political tensions within the country” (IDI 11, 2026).

Lastly, a respondent interviewed stated that:

“electoral malpractices during the 2019 and 2023 elections had significant implications for national security. They weakened public trust in the electoral system, encouraged political conflict, and increased the risk of violence in some communities. To safeguard national security, it is important for electoral institutions, political parties, and civil society organizations to promote transparency, accountability, and strict enforcement of electoral laws” (IDI 12, 2026).

4.2 Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

Ho¹ there is no relationship between electoral credibility and national security in the 2019 and 2023

Hr¹ there is a relationship between electoral credibility and national security in the 2019 and 2023.

| Table | | Correlations | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| | | Electoral credibility | National security |
| Electoral credibility | “Pearson Correlation” | 1 | .611** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 356 | 356 |
| National security | “Pearson Correlation” | .611** | 1` |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 356 | 356 |

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

There is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables ($p < .001$). The direction of the relationship is positive. There exists a strong positive relationship between electoral credibility and national security in Edo State, meaning that these variables tend to increase together. Hence, the increase in the electoral credibility will lead to a corresponding increase in improved national security. Thus, from the analysis, the study accepts the H_1 and rejects the H_0 which means that there is a strong nexus between between electoral credibility and national security in the 2019 and 2023 in Edo State.

Hypothesis Two

H_0^2 there is no relationship between voters’ education and national security in the 2019 and 2023

H_1^2 there is a relationship between voters’ education and national security in the 2019 and 2023

| Table | | Correlations | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | | Voters’ education | National security |
| Voters’ education | “Pearson Correlation” | 1 | .599** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 356 | 356 |

| | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------|-----|
| National security | “Pearson Correlation” | .599** | 1` |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 356 | 356 |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | | |

There is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables ($p < .001$). The direction of the relationship is positive. There exists a strong positive relationship between voters’ education and national security in Edo State, meaning that these variables tend to increase together. Therefore, the increase in the voters’ education and awareness will lead to a corresponding increase in national security. Thus, from the analysis, the study accepts H_1 and rejects the H_0 which means that there is a strong nexus between voters’ education and national security.

Hypothesis Three

H_0^3 there is no relationship between electoral violence and national insecurity in the 2019 and 2023

H_1^3 there is a relationship between electoral violence and national insecurity in the 2019 and 2023

| Table | | Correlations | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| | | Electoral violence | National insecurity |
| Electoral violence | “Pearson Correlation” | 1 | .604** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 356 | 356 |
| National insecurity | “Pearson Correlation” | .604** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 356 | 356 |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | | |

There is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables ($p < .001$). The direction of the relationship is positive. There exists a strong positive relationship between electoral violence and national insecurity, meaning that these variables tend to increase together. Therefore, the increase in the electoral violence will lead to a corresponding increase in national insecurity. Thus, from the analysis, the study accepts the H_1 and rejects the H_0 which means that there is a strong nexus between electoral violence and national insecurity in the 2019 and 2023.

Hypothesis Four

H_0^4 there is no relationship between electoral malpractices and national insecurity in the 2019 and 2023

H_1^4 there is a relationship between electoral malpractices and national insecurity in the 2019 and 2023.

| Table | | Correlations | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| | | Electoral malpractices | National insecurity |
| Electoral malpractices | “Pearson Correlation” | 1 | .709** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 356 | 356 |
| National insecurity | “Pearson Correlation” | .709** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 356 | 356 |

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

There is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables ($p < .001$). The direction of the relationship is positive. There exists a strong positive relationship between electoral malpractices and national insecurity, meaning that these variables tend to increase together. Hence, the increase in the electoral malpractices will lead to a corresponding increase in national insecurity. Thus, from the analysis, the study accepts the H_1 and rejects the H_0 which means that

there is a strong nexus between electoral malpractices and national insecurity in the 2019 and 2023.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

Globally, elections are a fundamental component of democratic governance, providing citizens with the opportunity to choose their leaders and influence public policies. In democratic societies, credible and transparent elections promote political legitimacy, strengthen institutions, and enhance public trust in government. In Nigeria, elections play a vital role in shaping the political landscape and ensuring the peaceful transfer of power. Since the return to democratic rule in 1999, the country has conducted several general elections aimed at consolidating democracy and promoting political stability.

However, the conduct of elections in Nigeria has often been associated with various challenges that have implications for national security. Issues such as electoral violence, vote buying, electoral malpractices, and political intimidation have occasionally undermined the credibility of the electoral process. These challenges sometimes lead to conflicts among political actors, voter apathy, and public distrust in democratic institutions. When electoral processes are perceived as unfair or manipulated, they can trigger protests, social unrest, and political instability, thereby threatening national security. The role of electoral management bodies, particularly the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), is therefore crucial in ensuring credible elections that promote peace and stability. Effective voter education, transparent electoral procedures, and strong legal frameworks are essential for minimizing electoral conflicts. Consequently, strengthening electoral integrity is critical not only for democratic consolidation but also for maintaining national security and sustainable development in Nigeria. Thus, the

study examines the effects of elections on national security in Nigeria, comparing the general elections of 2019-2023 in Edo State.

In objective one of the study, the study examines the impact of electoral credibility on national security in the 2019 and 2023. The study revealed that credible electoral process strengthens the legitimacy of government and national security efforts. Thus, strengthening electoral credibility is essential for improving Nigeria's overall security landscape. The study conforms to the study by Udochukwu, Ojo & Aideloje (2024) who asserts that a credible electoral process plays a critical role in strengthening the legitimacy of government in promoting peacebuilding and national security. Thus, when elections are transparent, free, and fair, citizens are more likely to trust the outcome and accept the authority of elected leaders. In Nigeria, credible elections conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission help build public confidence in democratic institutions and reduce political tensions. Such legitimacy enables the government to effectively implement security policies and address national challenges. Conversely, Obiagu and Abada (2023) argued that flawed elections trigger protests, violence, and distrust in governance. Thus, strengthening electoral credibility through transparency, accountability, and adherence to electoral laws is essential for improving Nigeria's overall security landscape and ensuring sustainable democratic stability beyond the 2019 and 2023 election debacles.

The data in Table 4.6 highlights the dual economic and cultural effects of globalization. Respondents agreed that electoral transparency contributes to national unity and political stability (mean = 4.67), credible electoral process strengthens the legitimacy of government and national security efforts (4.60) and that lack of electoral credibility increases the risk of insecurity in Nigeria (mean = 4.57). The study revealed that there is a relationship between electoral credibility and national security in the 2019 and 2023 @ 0.611 $p < 0.05$. These findings

are consistent with prior study by Onuorah and Ejima (2024) who assert that identifies key challenges, including electoral fraud, political violence, corruption, ethnic and religious tensions, and infrastructural deficiencies, which undermine electoral integrity and exacerbate security concerns. They buttress further that despite these challenges, prospects for improvement exist, notably through electoral reforms, technological innovations, strengthened institutions, and enhanced civic engagement.

The objective two of the study examines the impact of the impact of voter's education on national security in the 2019 and 2023. The result of the study revealed that well-informed voters are less likely to be manipulated into engaging in political unrest. Thus, voter education discourages the use of violence as a tool for political expression. The finding of the study was in tandem with the study Aluko and Monday (2023) that assert that voter's education is vital in promoting peaceful democratic participation and strengthening national security. In other words, when citizens are well informed about their voting rights, electoral procedures, and the consequences of political violence, they are less likely to be manipulated by politicians or interest groups seeking to incite unrest. In Nigeria, initiatives by the Independent National Electoral Commission and civil society organizations help voters understand the importance of peaceful participation in elections. Educated voters are more inclined to express their political preferences through lawful and constructive means rather than violence. Consequently, effective voter education discourages the use of violence as a tool for political expression and contributes to a more stable and secure democratic environment. Voters' Education promotes meaningful participation of citizens in the electoral and political processes, and in enhancing the credibility of the whole process {citizen-Voters' Education Campaign (2005-2009). According to Ayinde (2019), "voters' education calls for the political culture and the political awareness of the

political parties, candidates, and most importantly the electorates. The education of voters with an overhaul of electoral and political structures, processes, policies, and mechanisms tends to evolve around the primacy of party platforms and programs rather than personalities and enhances people's democratic participation in both the electoral process and in governance". In essence, it will lead to the development of a politically mature and critical electorate conversant with the processes and requirements of a full-fledged democracy.

The data in Table 4.7 highlights the impacts of voters' education on national security in the 2019 and 2023. Respondents agreed that communities with higher levels of civic awareness experience fewer election-related conflicts (mean = 4.24), voters education and public awareness campaigns during elections help promote peaceful participation and reduces the likelihood of electoral violence in Nigeria (4.00) and well-informed voters are less likely to be manipulated into engaging in political unrest (mean = 3.93). The study revealed that strong relationship between voters' education and national security in the 2019 and 2023 @ 0.599 $p < 0.05$. These findings are consistent with prior study by Chukwuma (2023) who posited that voter education messages disseminated via the media were very effective in raising the required awareness and mobilizing the citizens to participate in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. This point to the fact that when there is effective voter education, the high tendency for the required awareness and participation among the electorates is achieved.

In objective three, the study examines the effect of electoral violence on national security in the 2019 and 2023. The study discovered that electoral violence poses a major threat to national security in Nigeria. Thus, frequent electoral violence weakens citizens' trust in the state's ability to provide security. The study is in consistent with the view of Bribena (2025) who critically examined the impasse of violence marring Nigeria's electoral process and the negative

implication for human security and safety of the public. Globally, electoral violence poses a significant threat to national security because it often results in loss of lives, destruction of property, and widespread fear among citizens. In Nigeria, incidents of violence during elections have been reported in several electoral cycles, particularly during highly contested polls. The study identified that such violence undermines the credibility of democratic institutions and creates an atmosphere of instability. When citizens experience intimidation, clashes between political supporters, or attacks on electoral officials, their confidence in the state's ability to guarantee safety diminishes. Consequently, frequent electoral violence weakens public trust in government and security agencies, thereby undermining national cohesion and threatening the overall stability and security of the country.

The data in Table 4.8 examines the effects of electoral violence on national security in the 2019 and 2023. Respondents agreed that frequent electoral violence weakens citizens' trust in the state's ability to provide security (mean = 4.31), government's inability to curb electoral violence reflects weakness in national security institutions (4.24), electoral violence poses a major threat to national security in Nigeria (4.08) and the respondents stated that the destruction of lives and property during elections undermines national stability (mean = 4.12). The study revealed that strong relationship exists between electoral violence and national insecurity @ 0.604 $p < 0.05$. These findings are consistent with prior study by Ogboji, Nwaoha and Orie (2022) who posited that elections and electoral process in Nigeria has become a dangerous influence that pollutes different political units in West Africa sub-region, considering the position of Nigeria as a political and economic live wire of the region. The study posits that, electoral malpractice and violence in Nigeria is a serious threat to national and regional security.

Lastly, in objective four of the study, it identifies the effects of electoral malpractices on national security in the 2019 and 2023. The study revealed that widespread election rigging increases the risk of post-election violence. Thus, electoral malpractice fuels political tension that threatens national peace. The study is consistent with the study by Aluaigba (2016) who submitted that conduct of elections in Nigeria since 1999 has been inundated with spiralling malpractices in the electioneering process. Electoral malpractice undermines democratic integrity and fuels political tension that threatens national peace. In Nigeria, practices such as vote buying, ballot manipulation, and voter intimidation often generate disputes among political actors and supporters. These irregularities weaken trust in electoral institutions like the Independent National Electoral Commission and can trigger protests, violence, and instability (Omoyeni, 2025). Consequently, persistent electoral malpractice erodes democratic legitimacy and endangers national cohesion and security.

The data in Table 4.9 examines the effects of electoral malpractices on national security in the 2019 and 2023. Respondents agreed that electoral malpractice undermines the legitimacy of elected leaders and weakens security governance (mean = 4.18), widespread election rigging increases the risk of post-election violence (4.11), electoral malpractice fuels political tension that threatens national peace (3.98) and the respondents stated that the failure to punish electoral offenders encourages insecurity during future elections (mean = 4.05). The study revealed that there is a strong nexus between electoral malpractices and national insecurity in the 2019 and 2023 @ 0.709 $p < 0.05$. These findings are consistent with prior study by Obiagu (2023) who asserts that widespread election rigging poses a serious threat to political stability and national security. When electoral outcomes are manipulated through ballot stuffing, falsification of results, or intimidation of voters, citizens often lose confidence in the democratic process. In

Nigeria, allegations of election rigging in previous electoral cycles have frequently led to disputes among political parties and their supporters. These disputes can escalate into protests, riots, and violent confrontations after the announcement of election results. Such tensions undermine the legitimacy of elected leaders and weaken public trust in democratic institutions. Consequently, electoral malpractice fuels political grievances and increases the risk of post-election violence, threatening national peace, stability, and effective governance.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study examined the relationship between elections and national security in Nigeria, with particular reference to the general elections in Edo State. The study focused on four key objectives: examining the impact of electoral credibility, evaluating the role of voter education, assessing the effects of electoral violence, and determining the implications of electoral malpractices on national security. The research adopted a survey research design, which enabled the collection of primary data from respondents regarding their perceptions of electoral processes and security outcomes. The study was guided by system theory and human security theory, which explain how the interaction between political institutions, citizens, and governance structures affects societal stability and individual safety. This study's population is made up of the men and women of voting age (18 years and above) residing in three local government areas (Akoko Edo, Igueben, Uhumwode) from the three senatorial districts of Edo State which is 453,592 while the sample size for this study was 400 using the Taro Yamane formula. Findings revealed that electoral credibility plays a significant role in maintaining national security. The research adopts the stratified random sampling method to select three Local Government Areas from Edo State while the simple random sampling method was used in the administration of the research instrument on the respondents for the study. When elections are perceived as free, fair, and transparent, citizens are more likely to accept election outcomes peacefully, thereby reducing political tension and conflict. The study also found that voter education contributes to national security by improving citizens' understanding of the electoral process and discouraging manipulation or participation in political violence. However, the study further revealed that

electoral violence poses a serious threat to national security because it leads to fear, destruction of property, and loss of lives during election periods. Furthermore, electoral malpractices such as vote buying, voter intimidation, and ballot manipulation undermine democratic legitimacy and often result in post-election disputes and instability. In all, the study concludes that strengthening credible electoral processes, enhancing voter education, and addressing electoral violence and malpractice are essential for promoting national security and democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

5.2 Findings of the Study

- 1.** The study found that credible electoral process strengthens the legitimacy of government and national security efforts. Thus, strengthening electoral credibility is essential for improving Nigeria's overall security landscape.
- 2.** The study revealed that well-informed voters are less likely to be manipulated into engaging in political unrest. Thus, voter education discourages the use of violence as a tool for political expression.
- 3.** The study discovered that electoral violence poses a major threat to national security in Nigeria. Thus, frequent electoral violence weakens citizens' trust in the state's ability to provide security.
- 4.** The study revealed that widespread election rigging increases the risk of post-election violence. Thus, electoral malpractice fuels political tension that threatens national peace.

Conclusion

This study examined the effects of elections on national security in Edo State within the broader political environment of Nigeria by comparing the 2019 and 2023 general elections. The analysis focused on four major factors: electoral credibility, voter education, electoral violence, and electoral malpractices. The findings reveal that elections have a profound influence on national security because they shape citizens' perceptions of legitimacy, political stability, and trust in democratic institutions.

First, the study found that electoral credibility plays a crucial role in maintaining national security. When elections are perceived as transparent, free, and fair, citizens are more likely to accept the outcomes peacefully and cooperate with government authorities. Credible elections strengthen the legitimacy of elected leaders and reduce political tension. However, where electoral processes are perceived as manipulated or compromised, public confidence in governance weakens, which can lead to protests, political unrest, and instability (Ayogu, Egbara & Aleje, 2019). Strengthening electoral transparency and accountability is therefore essential for sustaining political order and security.

Second, the findings demonstrate that voter education significantly contributes to national security by promoting responsible political participation. Voter education programs help citizens understand electoral procedures, their rights and responsibilities, and the importance of peaceful participation. In both the 2019 and 2023 elections, voter awareness initiatives encouraged citizens to engage more constructively in the electoral process. Aluko and Monday (2023) assert that educated voters are less likely to be manipulated by political actors or misinformation, thereby reducing the likelihood of electoral conflict and promoting democratic stability.

Third, the study shows that electoral violence remains one of the most serious threats to national security during election periods. Violent incidents during elections can result in loss of lives, destruction of property, and widespread fear among citizens. Studies on Nigeria's electoral environment show that election-related violence discourages voter participation and undermines political development, while also diverting security resources toward managing election crises. In Nigeria's electoral history, hundreds of fatalities have been recorded during election cycles, highlighting the security risks associated with political competition (Igiebor, 2022). In Edo State, concerns over election-related violence have often led to the large-scale deployment of security personnel to maintain peace during elections. These patterns demonstrate that electoral violence not only disrupts democratic processes but also weakens public trust in the government's ability to maintain security.

Finally, the study reveals that electoral malpractices—such as vote buying, intimidation, ballot manipulation, and voter suppression have significant implications for national security. Electoral malpractice undermines the credibility of elections and generates political dissatisfaction among citizens and political actors (Aluaigba, 2016). When electoral outcomes are widely perceived as fraudulent, tensions may escalate into protests or violent confrontations. This situation threatens political stability and weakens democratic institutions. Furthermore, persistent electoral malpractice discourages citizen participation in future elections, thereby reducing public confidence in the democratic process.

In conclusion, the comparative assessment of the 2019 and 2023 general elections in Edo State shows that the quality of electoral processes is closely linked to national security. Credible elections and effective voter education promote peace and democratic stability, while electoral violence and malpractice increase the risk of political unrest and insecurity. Therefore,

strengthening electoral institutions, enhancing voter education, enforcing electoral laws, and ensuring adequate security during elections are essential strategies for safeguarding national security and consolidating democracy in Nigeria.

5.4 Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the followings recommendations were made:

1. The study recommends that electoral umpire should improve on the transparency of the electoral process. Thus, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should adhere strictly to advanced technologies such as electronic voting, real-time result transmission, and biometric verification to minimize human errors and manipulation in the electoral process to preserve electoral credibility for political stability and national security.
2. The study recommends that the government should intensify voter's education programmes across all levels of government in the society. The electoral umpire should collaborate with civil society organizations, media houses, religious institutions and community leaders to provide continuous civic education that emphasizes voters' rights, responsibilities and the importance of peaceful political participation in the electoral process to promote public safety.
3. The study recommends that the government implement a multi-faceted approach to prevent and mitigate post-election related violence by conducting free, fair and credible elections, and also galvanizing the security architecture of the country to protect public safety. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), in collaboration with security agencies, should develop and enforce strict security protocols during electoral periods, including strategic deployment of trained personnel to vulnerable polling units

and the use of surveillance technologies to monitor potential hotspots. Furthermore, early warning systems for detecting threats of electoral violence should be established at local and state levels, leveraging community networks to identify and defuse potential conflicts.

4. The study recommends that INEC as the electoral umpire strengthens both preventive and corrective measures to safeguard the integrity of elections in the country. Thus, it should implement advanced electoral technologies to reduce opportunities for manipulation. Also, strict monitoring and auditing mechanisms should be institutionalized to ensure transparency and accountability throughout the electoral process.

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QUESTIONNAIRE
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE,
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
BENIN CITY

Dear Respondent,

I am a post-graduate student of the above-named Department. I am conducting a research on **“Election and National Security in Nigeria: A Comparative Study of Two General Elections (2019 and 2023)”**. I wish you could assist me with information on the subject matter by ticking the appropriate column. The exercise is for academic research only and any information provided will be treated with confidentiality.

Thank you.

Yours Faithfully,

Okundia Joseph Osamudiamen

Researcher

SECTION A: BIODATA

Gender: Male () Female ()

Age: 18-28 () 29-39 () 40 and Above ()

Marital Status: Single () Married () Divorced ()

Religion: Christianity () Islam () African Traditional Religion ()

Educational Status: Primary () Secondary () Tertiary ()

Senatorial District: Edo South () Edo Central () Edo North ()

SECTION B

KEYS: SA-STRONGLY AGREE; A – AGREE; D – DISAGREE; SD-STRONGLY DISAGREE;

Please tick the space that best fit your view.

| RQ1 | What is the impact of electoral credibility on national security in the 2019 and 2023? | SA | A | D | SD |
|------------|--|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| | | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 1 | Electoral transparency contributes to national unity and political stability | | | | |
| 2 | A credible electoral process strengthens the legitimacy of government and national security efforts | | | | |
| 3 | Strengthening electoral credibility is essential for improving Nigeria's overall security landscape | | | | |
| 4 | Lack of electoral credibility increases the risk of insecurity in Nigeria | | | | |
| 5 | Credible elections will reduce the likelihood of post-election violence in Nigeria | | | | |
| RQ2 | What are the impacts of voters' education on national security in the 2019 and 2023? | SA | A | D | SD |
| 6 | Well-informed voters are less likely to be manipulated into engaging in political unrest | | | | |
| 7 | Voter education discourages the use of violence as a tool for political expression | | | | |
| 8 | Voters education and public awareness campaigns during elections help promote peaceful participation and reduces the likelihood of electoral violence in Nigeria | | | | |
| 9 | Voter education fosters tolerance and respect for diverse political views | | | | |
| 10 | Communities with higher levels of civic awareness experience fewer election-related conflicts | | | | |
| RQ3 | What are the effects of electoral violence on national security in the 2019 and 2023? | SA | A | D | SD |
| 11 | Electoral violence poses a major threat to national security in Nigeria | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| 12 | Frequent electoral violence weakens citizens' trust in the state's ability to provide security | | | | |
| 13 | Insecurity during elections discourages voter participation and weakens democracy | | | | |
| 14 | The destruction of lives and property during elections undermines national stability | | | | |
| 15 | Government's inability to curb electoral violence reflects weakness in national security institutions | | | | |
| RQ4 | What are the effects of electoral malpractices on national security in the 2019 and 2023? | | | | |
| 16 | Electoral malpractices contribute to the breakdown of law and order in Nigeria | | | | |
| 17 | widespread election rigging increases the risk of post-election violence | | | | |
| 18 | Electoral malpractice fuels political tension that threatens national peace | | | | |
| 19 | The failure to punish electoral offenders encourages insecurity during future elections | | | | |
| 20 | Electoral malpractice undermines the legitimacy of elected leaders and weakens security governance | | | | |

Thank you

Interview Guide

1. In your assessment, what were the key security challenges that emerged as a result of disputed election credibility during the 2019 and 2023 polls in Edo State?
2. How did the level of credibility in the 2019 and 2023 general elections influence citizens' trust in state institutions and the overall stability of Nigeria's democratic system particularly in Edo State?
3. How can improving electoral credibility in future elections reduce threats to national security, particularly in terms of curbing electoral violence, voter apathy, and separatist sentiments?
4. In what ways did inadequate or effective voters' education contribute to incidents of electoral violence and insecurity during these elections in Edo State?
5. How did the level of voters' education during the 2019 and 2023 elections influence citizens' political participation and its effect on national security?
6. To what extent did electoral violence during the 2019 and 2023 general elections affect public trust in Nigeria's democratic institutions and processes in Edo State?
7. In what ways did electoral violence contribute to insecurity, such as loss of lives, displacement, or destruction of property, in different regions of the country?
8. In your view, did electoral malpractices such as vote buying, ballot box snatching, or result manipulation during the 2019 and 2023 elections affect citizens' trust in governance and national security?